

صلى الله عليه وسلم



# THE INDEPENDENT

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FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 1997

WEATHER: Cold

(IR45p) 40p



**COMMENT**  
**Suzanne Moore**  
my resolutions for  
the rest of you **PAGE 3**



**THE TABLOID**  
**Face the**  
new year  
in style



**Schubert at 200**  
still better than  
the Beatles



## After 'Evita', Peron to face dirt-diggers

**Phil Davison**  
Latin America Correspondent

Madonna's latest starring role means that the international spotlight is once more focused on Evita Peron. Now Evita's husband, Argentina's populist leader General Juan Peron, is also being disinterred.

many Argentines believe his third wife's claim that he was impotent, a court in Buenos Aires has ruled that Ms Holgado might have a point and that a DNA test is in order.

Duarte, alias Evita. Why did it take her so long to come forward? Because her mother, who died only recently, pledged her to secrecy, of course. Nothing to do with the Madonna film.

Peron's death in 1974, the military regime removed his coffin from the presidential burial site and reburied it in another Buenos Aires cemetery.

And no hands ever showed up. Even Evita's body has been a movable object. After Juan Peron had her embalmed in 1952, soldiers smuggled her beautified corpse to Europe. There, somebody else took a finger.



## Jostling Tories shift on Europe

**Colin Brown**  
Chief Political Correspondent

The barely-veiled race to succeed John Major as Tory leader if he loses the election was thrown wide open yesterday when Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, broke Cabinet ranks to call for a renegotiation of Britain's relationship with Europe.

want a change of policy, and the rest are waiting for a lead from Mr Major. Mr Dorrell discussed his strategy with Mr Major and had the Prime Minister's tacit backing.



**Stephen Dorrell: broke Cabinet ranks on Europe**

spokesman. John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, derided it as a "crude effort to outflank Michael Howard in the fight for the Tory leadership".

Mr Dorrell - once a staunch pro-European - refused to be drawn on whether renegotiation would lead to Britain eventually pulling out of Europe, if it failed to win acceptance from the other member states.



Blade runners: Ice-skaters in Cambridgeshire practising for the annual Welney Championships to be held tomorrow **Big chill continues, page 2** Photograph: Keith Dobney

## Detective attacks the spin-policemen

**Jason Bennetto**  
Crime Correspondent

One of the country's most senior detectives, who is quitting his job to join the private sector, yesterday made a blistering attack on modern policing, accusing it of being more interested in public relations and making people "feel good" than in catching criminals.

including the recovery of Munch's *Scream*, stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo. Now the head of the CID in Belgrave, Mr Hill joins Nordstrom, a specialist art and antiques insurance company on Monday as a "risk manager" responsible for intelligence.

"I remain convinced that getting criminals successfully prosecuted is what the police should be doing." He blamed the rise in crime largely on the "nature of society unravelling" and because a growing number of offenders believe that they can get away with it. He admitted that an increase in salary, which he declined to disclose, was also an incentive.

## Good Chinese don't love us - Patten

**Stephen Vines**  
Hong Kong

Chris Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, has spoken openly of the mixed British legacy, as he prepares to sail out of Hong Kong in six months' time on 1 July.

openly with great public enthusiasm for Britain's contribution and role in Hong Kong," he said in an interview with *The Independent* which was notably free of any flag-waving.

Mr Patten's harshest words were reserved for those who were once bastions of the colonial regime and are now cheerleaders for the new order.

ple of Hong Kong but everything to do with themselves. It doesn't seem to be so much to do with realism as a lack of commitment, sustained commitment, to the values which have shaped this community."

sometimes made, that you can drop in and out of Westminster politics as though the House of Commons was the RAC Club, both politically naive and extremely presumptuous. I don't know whether I want to set my hat at trying to resume a career in party politics and even if I do, I recognise all the problems."

**QUICKLY**  
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The IRA planned to carry out the "mass murder" of police and soldiers with a new year's eve bomb attack. **Page 2**

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**Indurain retires**  
Miguel Indurain, the only man to win the Tour de France five years in a row, announced his retirement yesterday. **Page 23**

**Hedge victory**  
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**EVITA**

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## news



Visitors to the 1997 London International Boat Show at Earls Court yesterday took off their shoes before boarding vessels. The show officially opens today Photograph: Tom Pilton

## IRA planned mass murder, say RUC

David McKittrick  
Ireland correspondent

The IRA planned to carry out the "mass murder" of police and soldiers with a New Year's Eve bomb attack in north Belfast, the Royal Ulster Constabulary said yesterday.

Police yesterday put on show a 1,000lb device found in a van which had been left in the extensive grounds of a local hostelry, the Belfast Castle. It had been placed inside two "wheelie-bins."

They said the intention was almost certainly to lure the security forces into the grounds and then detonate the device. A bomb of such size, if set off close to a patrol, could have been expected to wreck even an armoured vehicle, killing or seriously injuring those inside.

The plan failed, however, when a member of the public

became suspicious of the vehicle and reported it to the police. The device was defused in a three-day military operation.

The incident is the latest in a series of IRA operations over recent months which have demonstrated that the organisation is intent on killing members of the security forces. A soldier was killed at army headquarters in Lisburn, Co Antrim in early October, but most of the other attacks have, in IRA terms, been failures.

RUC chief superintendent William Davidson said the device had the potential to cause massive casualties, adding: "There were a number of functions at the castle. This is a densely populated area and also an area where large numbers of teenagers frequent, especially at a time like New Year's Eve."

"The potential for dreadful

death and injury with this device doesn't bear thinking about. Anyone would be extremely foolish not to be concerned about the prospects for the coming weeks."

As well as being braced for further IRA attacks, the security forces are also worried about an escalation of loyalist violence. Loyalists have already planted two booby-trap car-bombs in recent weeks, and the continuing IRA campaign is generally thought to increase the chances of further loyalist incidents.

Billy Hutchinson of the Progressive Unionist Party, which has links to the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force, said he regarded the loyalist ceasefire to be officially holding, but warned that tensions were growing.

He said: "This find proves this is all-out war back again in Northern Ireland, with the

Provos moving to take life. I don't think that loyalists can hold much longer."

"I would be concerned that if the Provos don't draw back from trying to take life then the loyalists will go back completely and there will be no stopping them. I think it's slipping back by the hour. It's very serious."

The series of both republican and loyalist attacks have increased a general sense of foreboding in Belfast and elsewhere. So far as anyone knows there is no communication between republicans and the British government, with the assumption widespread that all sides are doing little more than marking time before the general election.

In the meantime, however, the IRA appears intent on using violence to keep the Irish issue high on the British political agenda.

## Cold snap set to last through the weekend

Michael Streeter

Britain looks set for colder temperatures today with the Big Chill lasting at least until Sunday as the row over cold weather payments heated up.

Forecasters predicted that stronger winds from the North-east would cause parts of the country to feel even colder today, with snow flurries in Kent and the east coast causing more problems for motorists.

Meanwhile Harriet Harman, Labour spokeswoman for Social Security, said it was a "scandal" that millions of people were so poor they had to choose between heating and food. She called for improved pensions and for VAT on fuel to be cut from 8 per cent to no more than 5 per cent.

"We shouldn't have so many people who have worked hard all their lives, either out at work or bringing up their children, who then find they retire into poverty."

David Winnick, who led a delegation of Labour MPs to Downing Street calling for change to the way cold-weather payments are made, said their case had been strengthened by the events of the past week.

"It shows the farcical nature of the system that exists that it has taken over a week of very, very cold weather before at long last payments are being made," said Mr Winnick, MP for Walsall North. Labour MP Ann Clywd also called for the wind chill factor to be taken into account when measuring how cold it really is.

Andrew Mitchell, junior So-

cial Security minister, said he was satisfied with the way cold weather payments system operated.

"We have announced that the scheme is triggered today across large parts of the country. A further £8m will be being paid."

Some £19m had been paid out since Christmas, he added. Mr Mitchell said the Government was considering taking the wind chill factor into account, but warned it would not be easy.

Despite the end of the holidays, motoring organisations reported quiet roads as many people stayed at home rather than risk trying to get to work. A spokesman for the Automobile Association said: "Traffic is very, very light and we certainly didn't see anything like a rush hour."

However, for those who did venture out there were problems getting cars started. The RAC said it was receiving up to 3,000 emergency calls an hour yesterday.

The coldest place in Britain on Wednesday night was RAF Benson in Oxfordshire, where a temperature of minus 12C was recorded.

The warmest place was in the Western Isles of Scotland which enjoyed a balmy 7C overnight, on a par with Nice.

The London Weather Centre said: "We are not expecting a thaw in the next few days and if anything things are going to get colder with snow working its way to the south coast by tonight," a spokeswoman said.

The cold snap claimed another two lives yesterday bringing the death toll to at least 10 since last weekend.

## significant shorts

### Drug blamed for teenager's death at party

A 16-year-old boy collapsed and died after taking a drug at a New Year party, police said yesterday. Robert Hitchens, from Uppingham, Essex, is believed to have taken ecstasy before collapsing at the David Lloyd Sports Centre, Heston, west London.

He was taken to Ealing Hospital after police were called to the centre at 7.36am on New Year's Day. He died that afternoon. A post-mortem examination is due to take place today.

The teenager's death is the third in recent days thought to have been connected with drugs. In Cardiff, a Muslim teenager who is thought to have taken an Ecstasy tablet, collapsed and died during a huge rave party. And Nicola Edwards, 24, from Middlesbrough, died after being detained by police in Strathclyde.

### Lottery cash 'misspent'

Three quarters of people think the National Lottery pays out too much money to a few big causes, according to research published by the Consumers' Association yesterday. Many people also believe lottery cash should be distributed equally throughout the country, said the survey of 2,000 adults.

Which? senior editor Andrew McIlwain said: "The Lottery is undoubtedly a very successful way of raising money for good causes. But a clear national strategy is needed to ensure the cash raised is distributed evenly and fairly."

### Mixed-race heartache

Mixed-race couples are regular victims of racial abuse and most often suffer taunts from blacks, it is claimed today. An estimated 40 per cent of black men and 20 per cent of black women have a white partner.

According to *Company* magazine, which published the claims, black men who go out with white women come in for the most flak, because it is feared they then turn their back on black culture.

Interviews with 10 couples revealed they had routinely suffered racist jibes and were often forced to hide their relationship when out in public together.

### Grass that's always greener

Scientists at the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research in Wales have developed an "evergreen" grass that refuses to fade in dry conditions, making it easier to maintain golf courses, parks and football pitches.

### End of the world is not high

Jehovah's Witnesses may breathe a sigh of relief this week. For the end of the world failed to take place for the second time in 20 years.

A growing number of Christian academics believe that Christ was born in 4BC, making 1996, 2,000 years after his birth, the real millennial milestone. But those who agree with Archbishop James Usher, a 17th century archbishop, who believed the world would endure for only 6,000 years, would probably have spent this Christmas cashing in their life insurance policies.

"Archbishop Usher used the *Anno Mundi* calendar, which was a popular way to mark time. According to this, Christ's birth was widely considered to have taken place in year 4,000 of the world, which meant that it would have ended on Wednesday [1 January] at the latest," said Marina Benjamin, whose book on the social significance of millennia and other endings is published later this year. *Jojo Moyes* Leading article, Page 17

### Serial rapist fears grow

A suspected serial rapist may have struck again in the spa town of Bath, after a 23-year-old woman was dragged into an alley and indecently assaulted. The attack follows a major police investigation into a series of sex assaults in Bath and the nearby city of Bristol since 1991.

So far they have identified connections between six known incidents - three rapes and two attempted attacks in Bath and one rape in Bristol. It is understood that six further possible cases have been found, although police have not disclosed details.

A team of 60 detectives is also examining the suspected abduction of a 26-year-old woman from a Bath night club last year and the murders of two women from outside clubs in Bristol and Plymouth. *Jason Bennett*

### No more tickets to ride

All 28,000 Metropolitan Police officers have had free travel passes withdrawn after the discovery that some were being fraudulently used by their relatives and friends. The abuse of the London Underground passes, which allows free use of tube trains, was discovered by ticket inspectors.

A small number of officers were found to have lent their passes to civilians and continued to use their warrant card, which also gives free travel.

A London Underground spokesman said evidence had been uncovered to suggest that "significant fraud" was taking place. *Jason Bennett*

## Long history of mainland attacks

John Crossland

Attempts by the IRA to bomb themselves into peace talks - and for bombers to blow themselves up rather than the target - are nothing new, formerly secret Metropolitan Police papers released yesterday at the Public Record Office reveal.

In the summer of 1921, just as Michael Collins was planning his campaign to wrest independence from Britain, his active service units, whether officially sanctioned or freelance, were using more direct tactics to concentrate Prime Minister Lloyd-George's mind on the coming talks.

They torched the home of a

Royal Irish Constabulary policeman in footing, south London, cut telephone wires along the rail lines to the West of England, shot and wounded a railway signalman and burnt his box, and set up a bomb factory with fatal consequences.

On 28 July 1921, a 21-year-old Irishman Michael McInerney, one of Collins's agents ordered, as today over to the mainland to apply pressure for a forthcoming political campaign, blew himself up at a garage in Greenwich, south-east London, which he had rented as a bomb-making factory. He died in hospital from his burns.

An Irishman giving the alias

of James Edwards had rented the garage for 10 shillings a week paid in advance. McInerney, who posed as a mechanic, was one of his team.

In the debris of the garage, firemen found incendiary bombs, two revolvers, part of a Lewis gun and many rounds of ammunition. More importantly, in a burnt wallet, they found a complete formula for constructing incendiary bombs. The notes record: "When black powder is confined there is always a danger of explosion and if the box [drawn with a wick protruding from the top] is merely held in place by tacks there would be a tendency for the whole outfit to blow up."



Michael Collins: IRA legend

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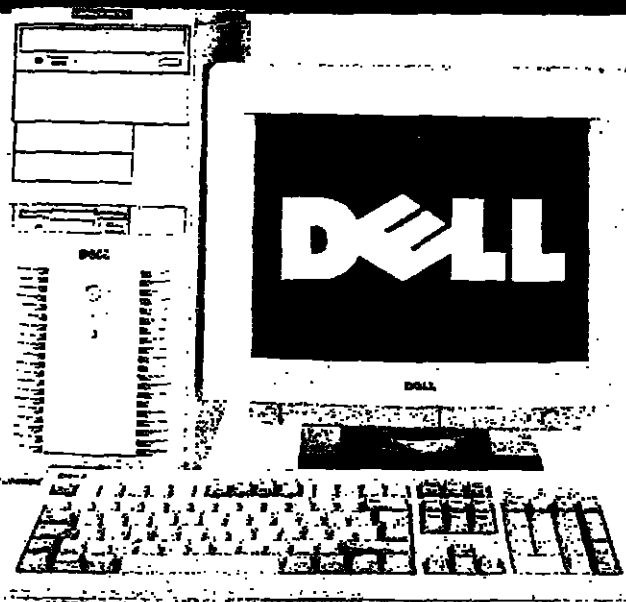
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## Contemporary art is high fashion for first time since sixties as world focus turns to Britain



Super-cool: David Hockney, David Bowie, Howard Hodgkin and Damien Hirst, and works, all exhibitors at the London Contemporary Art Fair, which reflects a new excitement in art

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

David Lister  
Arts News Editor

Art is sexy and hip for the first time since the Sixties. London has ousted New York and Paris as the epicentre of the contemporary art world.

Such assertions have been made before, but this time they seem to be borne out by the facts. The London Contemporary Art Fair, ART 97, which opens on the 15th of this month, is set to become one of the glamour events of the social calendar as well as an economic barometer for the art market.

The art world's style leaders, such as Damien Hirst, the Turner Prize winner Douglas Gordon and his fellow short-listed artist Gary Hume, will have works on show, priced at up to £100,000.

But the art fair will also be studied for the rising stars,

including Adam Chodzko, the mixed-media artist who uses photographs sometimes sent to him by members of the public and Liz Arnold, the surrealist who has exhibited at The Saatchi Gallery's Young British Artists shows, as well as names such as Liam Gillick, the installationist, the photographers Susan Derges and Gary Fabian Miller and the painters Maria Chevska and Mark Francis.

A Francis monograph, worth about £400 a year ago, is likely to fetch up to £1,200 at the art fair, one indication of the rising stock of British artists.

Lucy Sicks, director of ART

97, says: "The scene is a particularly exciting one. The whole British art phenomenon has been artist-led, starting famously with Damien Hirst. And now there are young dynamic dealers coming up alongside the young dynamic artists. London galleries such as Robert Prime, Lottahammer and Laurent Delage have sprung up to show the bright young things."

The glossy style magazine *Harpers & Queen* is hosting a charity gala evening at the fair, and its latest issue declares that art, not comedy as often predicted, is "the new rock 'n' roll".

Supporting evidence is not

hard to find. Hollywood is embarking on a series of art related films with Merchant Ivory's current biopic with Anthony Hopkins soon to be followed by Malcolm McDowell as Francis Bacon, Michelle Pfeiffer as Georgia O'Keeffe, with Modigliani and Jackson Pollock yet to be cast.

Rock stars are turning to painting, either doing it themselves as in the case of David Bowie (who has joined the editorial board of *Modern Painters* magazine), or commenting upon it, in the case of Jarvis Cocker and the recent television coverage of the Turner Prize.

And when the Princess of Wales dropped most of the societies of which she was patron, she was careful to hang on to London's cutting-edge Serpentine Gallery.

The amorphous group informally led by Damien Hirst and known as Young British Artists may not all be as designer chic as their leader, and their style is far from homogeneous, ranging from Hirst's udderless bovine cross-sections to Rachel Whiteread's cast of a House to Douglas Gordon's video of Hitchcock's *Psycho* slowed down to last 24 hours. But as a group they have

attracted considerable attention in international art shows.

Dealers such as Jay Jopling, who represents Hirst, are said to run their stables of artists in the same high-profile way as the Sixties pop impresario Andrew Loog Oldham once managed the Rolling Stones. Exhibitors such as Jibby Beane no longer just use a traditional art gallery but lease out a Smithfield warehouse with live-performance art models on show among the artworks, reminiscent of a Sixties happening.

And the Young British Artists have grabbed the mood of the moment, just as their

forbears such as David Hockney grabbed the mood of the Sixties. According to the art critic Martin Gayford, who sits on the editorial board of *Modern Painters* with David Bowie, "New York and Germany have been quiescent since the catastrophic collapse of the Eighties art bubble. Right now, for the first time in history, London is the place. The Young British Artists are ironic, super-cool, disengaged, and disenchanted, while simultaneously being fizzy, peppy and energetic."

Where the Pop artists of the Sixties lauded the whizzo excitement of the world of mass

production, the YBAs' focus is on the dinginess of everyday life. Gayford suggests the catch-all label "dinginess with attitude".

For the ninth London Contemporary Art Fair, which runs for five days at the Business Design Centre in Islington, attitude is part of the attraction, glamour another factor, but sales, higher prices and the continuing international kudos of young British talent the *sine qua non*. The organisers are confident of a record year, generating sales in excess of £2m, with 80 galleries taking part. There is a "discovery zone" for new talent-spotting, represented by some of the new breed of Britain's artist-led spaces including The Fannery, Catalyst Arts, Hales Gallery and Cairn Gallery — converted factories and railway buildings selling new artists who have not yet graduated to London's Cork Street.

## London at the heart of art

## Rise in breath-test failures brings call for lower limit

Jason Bennetto  
Crime Correspondent

A growing number of motorists appear to be ignoring the Christmas campaign against drink-driving. Police revealed yesterday that there had been 18 per cent rise in the number of positive breath-tests.

News that 5,209 drivers in England and Wales were arrested, compared with last year's figure of 4,330, brought renewed calls for a new lower "one-pint" limit and tougher police powers to stop motorists.

Figures released by the Association of Chief Police Officers show there were 974 alcohol-related accidents during the course of the Christmas campaign, an increase of 4 per cent over last year's figure of 939.

Paul Manning, secretary of Acpo's traffic committee and an assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said: "Both figures show there is no room for complacency and there are still people prepared to risk the lives of others and themselves by acting irresponsibly."

Mr Manning added that he believed the increase was partly due to the police's new policy of breathalysing every driver involved in an accident. Some of the increase may also be due to a rise in the number of mo-



One for the road: The scarred face of the woman who featured in this year's advertising campaign against drink-driving

torists tested, but police were unable to supply a figure for the total number of tests performed.

Mr Manning dismissed suggestions that the Department of Transport's £1.2m television campaign had been a failure.

The advertisements featured a young woman severely scarred from a road accident caused by her drunken boyfriend. Campaigners point out that many of the hard-core drink-drivers are middle-aged men who are less

likely to be affected by the advertisement.

Among the police forces with the biggest increases were Gwent where 117 motorists failed breath tests, compared with 56 last year, but officers tested nearly double the number of drivers. The number of drivers testing positive in Northumbria rose to 181, from 112. Almost one in four of the 672 motorists tested failed.

There was a 20 rise in South Wales, a 35 per cent increase in West Mercia and 15 per cent in Lancashire. In Greater Manchester, there were 361 arrests following positive tests over Christmas and New Year, a rise of more than 7 per cent.

The Metropolitan Police recorded 895 positive tests compared with 650 last year. The number of alcohol-related accidents also rose by nine to 144.

In Merseyside, however, there was a 28 per cent drop in positive tests despite an almost threefold increase in checks to 11,160. Dorset and Gloucestershire also reported a drop.

Glenda Jackson, a shadow transport minister, said that a future Labour government would review the existing laws with a mind to lowering the legal limit from 80mg per 100ml of blood to 50mg — equivalent to about a pint of strong beer.

## Sperm counts halve over decade

Liz Hunt  
Health Editor

Sperm production by middle-aged men has deteriorated by as much as 50 per cent in the last 10 years and testicles are smaller, according to a study by Finnish scientists which provides further evidence of declining male fertility.

The proportion of men in Finland aged between 35 to 69 with normal spermatogenesis — with normal sperm — fell from about 56 per cent to 27 per cent between 1981 and 1991.

Over the same period there was a significant increase in the number of men with no mature sperm cells, a condition known

as spermatogenic arrest. The incidence of complete spermatogenic arrest rose from 8 per cent to 20 per cent, and of partial spermatogenic arrest from 31 per cent to 48.5 per cent.

The post-mortem study of two groups, one comprising 264 men who died in 1981 and the other of 264 men who died in 1991 showed that the weight of the men's testicles had also diminished over the study period; seminiferous tubes were smaller, and there was increased fibrosis (thickening) of testicular tissue. The mean age of the groups was 53, and there were no significant differences in cause of death between the two groups. More than half

died from diseases and a third died violently or from intoxication (accidents or suicide).

Writing in tomorrow's issue of the *British Medical Journal*, Dr Jarkko Pajarinen from the Department of Forensic Medicine at Helsinki University, and colleagues write: "... the incidence of normal spermatogenesis has decreased significantly among middle-aged men, with a parallel increase in the rate of disorders of spermatogenesis ... between 1981 and 1991. This finding suggests that the quality and dispatch of spermatogenesis are deteriorating in middle-aged men and also confirms earlier presumptions on deteriorating sperma-

togenesis being the main cause of decreasing sperm counts."

Another Scandinavian team first alerted the scientific community in 1992 to declining sperm counts. Professor Niels Skakkebaek at Copenhagen University reviewed studies involving almost 15,000 men between 1938 and 1992 and found the average sperm count had fallen from 113 million per millilitre in 1940 to 66 million in 1990. The definition of a "normal" sperm count fell from 60 million per millilitre to 20 million in the same period. Critics claimed fundamental flaws in the data but two studies in France and Belgium in 1994 confirmed the findings.

## The Eurostar January Sale.

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## news

# Victory for a man who won't hedge his bets

Ruling will safeguard future of ancient hedgerows

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

The man with a credible claim to be Britain's most successful amateur lawyer notched up his latest courtroom victory yesterday, saving a 230-year-old hedgerow from destruction.

Now, both conservationists and the Government must consider the implications of Colin Seymour's triumph – over his local parish council – for safeguarding thousands of miles of hedgerow, dating back to 18th and 19th Century Enclosure Acts.

Mr Seymour, a 63-year-old former teacher, who is partially deaf and lives on invalidity benefit, has won 81 legal battles, mostly involving preserving rights of way and righting environmental wrongs. Big councils and companies have found themselves forced to take remedial actions costing them hundreds of thousands of pounds.

In yesterday's ruling, Judge Tom Cracknell, sitting at Hull

County Court, said that under the 1765 Act, which created the 50 yards of hedge in question Flamborough Parish Council, was still required to maintain it. The council had wanted it destroyed to make room for a green for the village's bowls club.

The judge pointed out: "It is a singularly indistinguishable hedge... very badly maintained, unkempt and straggly." But, he added: "The courts cannot and do not strike down statute merely because it is old and passed by a Parliament that was very far from being elected by universal suffrage."

Mr Seymour, who has lived in the coastal village for six years, said: "I'm delighted with the outcome of this case, but there are always new legal battles to fight and although this hedge is safe, others will have to be fought over."

Conservationists believe that more than 4,000 other enclosure Acts cover a further 40,000 miles of hedges. These statutes ended communal farming and

transformed the English landscape.

But the judge warned: "It would be wrong to read too much into this case in terms of significance for roadside hedges generally... whether a provision is binding has to be judged in each individual case."

Peter Bowler, chairman of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, which has supported the action, said: "It is a great day both for wildlife and countryside landscape in the future because the judgement will give us a stronger arm to protect thousands of miles of hedgerow."

Some villagers are unhappy that their neighbour has scotched the bowling plans. Trevor Pearson, a councillor, said: "The village would not have an entrance to its school, library or village hall if we had not removed other hedges."

And the judge commented: "He [Mr Seymour] may be a hero to some but, to others, I have no doubt that he is the villain of the piece and a thorough nuisance."



Branching out: Colin Seymour with the hedge he saved. Some villagers have been angered by his action

Photograph: Tim Smith/Guzelian

## Great notion: A professor of good ideas

Keith Martin

The world's first "professor" of good ideas has been appointed to head a new university department of suggestion schemes.

Geoff Lloyd, a former gas fitter, puts on his gown as a research fellow at the University of Wales on Monday. "The university wants a European centre of excellence to promote the awareness of employee suggestion schemes," said Mr Lloyd, 50. "The unit here is unique."

For once, Britain is ahead of America and Mr Lloyd has been asked to help the University of Central Michigan to set up a similar unit.

The move is part of a revolution in suggestion schemes, of which the estimated 100,000-plus annually in Britain save industry around £500m.

The days of the tin box marked "Suggestion Scheme" hanging in the works canteen and never emptied are passing. Go-ahead companies now tap into employees' cost-cutting brainwaves in a big way.

The new academic's former company, British Gas, has launched a scheme to save up to £300m in its pipeline and storage arm over the next two years, largely from employees' bright ideas.

"There are still firms with the tin box kind of suggestion schemes," said Mr Lloyd, a former chairman of the United Kingdom Association of Suggestion Schemes. "I want to raise the profile of suggestion schemes and show how they can become an important part of problem-solving and a mechanism for change."

As part of Mr Lloyd's PhD in suggestion schemes, he has sent out Britain's first national suggestion scheme survey, to 25,000 people in 200 companies.

asking why suggestions were submitted, or why they were not.

Mr Lloyd, who has written a book on the subject, said his unit would be asking what drove people to make suggestions. "Is it money, recognition by their peers or by their managers, or is it love of the company?"

He will give lectures on the subject to students on MSc and Master of Business Administration courses.

### Six best suggestions

■ A Royal Navy commander picked up £25,000 for a fuel-saving idea – called the Harrier ski-jump – for Sea Harriers. Taking off vertically used vast quantities of fuel. The commander suggested the aircraft take off from an angled platform, which is much more fuel efficient.

■ An East London gas stores man suggested bar coding supplies to identify slow-moving items. The payoff was £4.4m in the first year.

■ Swan Vesta save thousands of pounds by applying a factory worker's brainwave to put sandpaper on only one side of each matchbox.

■ A labourer in Bristol called Andy Hitchman gave his name to the Hitchman's swivel in 1993, an attachment that helps lay gas pipe underground. He won £11,000.

■ Someone spotted a way of developing the Post-it note when an experiment involving glue went wrong.

■ A British Rail worker, tired of having to replace copper wire on overhead cables, suggested fitting a rayon sleeve over the wire. It is believed to have saved hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr Lloyd, who left British Gas after six years running suggestion schemes, has himself only ever made one suggestion – and he was fobbed off. "The experience turned me into a passionate advocate of how to treat people who submit suggestions," he said.

And the first good idea after hanging up his mortar board behind the door? "I'll put the kettle on," he smiled.

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# Ban on man after Dunblane threat

A prisoner who has allegedly threatened to "do a Dunblane" after his release from jail was yesterday banned by the High Court from entering any council buildings or schools in a south-east London borough.

The emergency injunction won by Greenwich council against 50-year-old David Jennings, which also forbids him to carry firearms or other offensive weapons or interfere with children, teachers and other staff, is effective until a full hearing next Monday at which a permanent court order will be sought.

The council's solicitor, Helen Vautier, said after yesterday's private hearing that the injunction "in no sense pre-judges the result of the full hearing". But if Mr Jennings broke any of its terms, he would be in contempt of court, she said.

This means that Mr Jennings, due for release today, will be at risk of being sent back to jail if he breaches the order.

Yesterday's emergency hearing became necessary after it was learned that Mr Jennings was to be set free four days earlier than expected.

Last month, newspapers reported an allegation that Mr Jennings, a father of 10, had told a chaplain at Highpoint Prison, Suffolk, that he would carry out a "Dunblane massacre" because he was outraged at Greenwich council's treatment of his children in care.

The High Court delayed a decision on the council's initial application for an injunction until next Monday, 24 hours before Mr Jennings, who lives in Eltham within the borough of Greenwich, was due to be released from his 30-month sentence for assault.

But following a review of the time he had spent in custody, it was announced on Tuesday that

he would be released today.

A council spokesman said: "The council and the police have worked closely together to take all necessary steps to review the safety of schools and council buildings in the borough."

"Because of the new year holiday and the unexpected announcement of the impending release, we are seeking the help of the media to ensure people in our community including teachers and parents are informed about what has happened."

Mr Jennings was moved from Highpoint Prison to Elmley jail on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent following his alleged threat and is due to be released after serving about half of his sentence. He has previous convictions for assaulting council officers and possessing a firearm in public.

Yesterday's injunction, granted by Mr Justice Butterfield, bans Mr Jennings from entering or attempting to enter any council building or school and from going within a certain distance of some of them; owning or carrying firearms or any other offensive weapon; and interfering with any children, teachers or other staff at the council's schools, or any council employee.

Mr Jennings' solicitor, James Bancroft, said his client would strongly contest the court hearing. The terms of the injunction being sought were "very onerous and extremely severe, meaning he could not live an ordinary life in an area where he has lived for 25 years".

Mr Bancroft added: "He admits saying something similar to the alleged comments, but there was never any intention to make a serious threat. It was just rubbish he spouted while unburdening himself to the prison chaplain because the social services had failed to bring his children to see him."



Safe stalk: A woman walks by a shop-window display of 'white goods' in London, as the MMC is expected to ask for a curb on alleged 'price-fixing'

Photograph: Tom Pilsten

## Plug pulled on electrical goods 'price-fixing'

Glenda Cooper

As the annual frenzy of the January sales continues, tough new measures to stop alleged price-fixing of electrical appliances such as washing machines are expected to be recommended by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission this spring.

The MMC is expected to urge the Government to prohibit manufacturers from recommending prices to retailers and is also considering whether to require them to sign a formal undertaking that they will not refuse to supply discount retailers or try to control prices. The *Economist* reports today.

While manufacturers and retailers strenuously deny price-fixing, according to sources close to the MMC, the commission thinks that the consumer has been getting a raw deal when it comes to buying "white goods" such as washing machines, fridges and dishwashers.

The MMC has twice delayed the publication of its inquiry into allegations of price-fixing, but is finally expected to report back this April.

The 1976 Resale Prices Act made price-fixing illegal and also prohibits suppliers from

withholding or threatening to withhold goods or from offering less favourable terms to discount retailers.

Two years ago the Consumers' Association surveyed high-street stores and found that many top-brand electrical goods were being priced identically across the country. When the association telephoned a range of stores, several said that they would lose their dealership if

they offered a discount on the recommended retail price. A leading chain store in Slough said: "The prices you see in the stores are set by the manufacturer". Another said: "It's difficult to do discounts as manufacturers exert pressure on shops not to".

A recent survey for the BBC's *Panorama* programme found that identical video recorders were priced at £479.99 in 17 out

of 22 stores, refrigerators at £249.99 in 16 out of 19 stores, and washing machines at £429.99 at ten out of eleven stores.

In 1994 the combined market share of five retail chains selling domestic electrical appliances was 42 per cent. It is alleged that retailers who step out of line are punished by exclusion. Jim Murphy, the managing director of Price Costco, a warehouse membership club which charges at

least 20 per cent less than high-street outlets, told *The Economist* that excuses given by manufacturers for refusing to trade with him ranged from the environment being wrong to his staff not being trained in how the product works. "The current system does not encourage... efficient distribution to the consumer," he said.

Richard Hyman, of the retail analysts Verdict, said that claims

of conspiracy between retailers and manufacturers should be treated with caution: "It is not quite as it seems. It is not meeting in smoke-filled rooms... it isn't that overt."

But he added that the argument that customer service would not be good enough in warehouse outlets was not correct: "If the consumer thinks it's OK to buy from there then it should be."

## Film maker keeps options open on Fred West rights

Clare Garner

A film version of the life of Cromwell Street mass murderer Fred West may still be made for television. The independent production company which has bought up the memoirs admitted yesterday that it had not ruled out exploiting the rights in future.

While there are no immediate plans to develop a film based on West's confession-tapes, memoirs and blue-movie videos, the Portman Entertainment Group has not ruled out the possibility of a television film or mini-series.

In a statement, John Banks, chairman of Portman, said yesterday that the rights were just one of many projects in the

pipeline of the company which produced the television mini-series *A Woman of Substance*, was involved in financing the Hugh Grant film *An Awfully Big Adventure*, and acquired the British rights to *Home and Away*.

"A production company of Portman's size will acquire a considerable number of rights to material or stories during the course of a year, only a tiny number of which result in completed productions," said Mr Banks.

"When and if the topic comes before the board of Portman for full consideration, the sensitivity of the subject matter will, of course, be taken into account. It could only have been done in collaboration with a broadcaster - the BBC were originally interested - so the approach

would have had to have been very sensitive."

The £12,000 film-rights deal was brokered by Peter Harris, the Official Solicitor whose task it is to maximise the financial return on the West estate. But the deal has led to a review of the law governing the duties of the Official Solicitor by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay.

Gary Streeter, Minister at the Lord Chancellor's Office, said the Official Solicitor had done nothing wrong in law, but the review had been announced because of public concern. He said that when he and the Lord Chancellor heard the news about the film rights being sold "we both felt this cannot be right... and therefore we need to urgently review the score".

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## news

## Top Tories jockey for position: The Independent offers a guide to weight and form



Stephen Dorrell

**Profile:** Aged 44, Secretary of State for Health. Dripping wet but drying out fast. Campaign strategy: meets backbenchers for quiet chat in his rooms; bidding for centre-right ground with former Clarke votes in the bag. Carefully timed briefing by "friends" to Daily Telegraph, noticeboard of the Euro-sceptics. Form: coming up hard on the rails; still to prove himself with the sceptics. Odds - 6:1



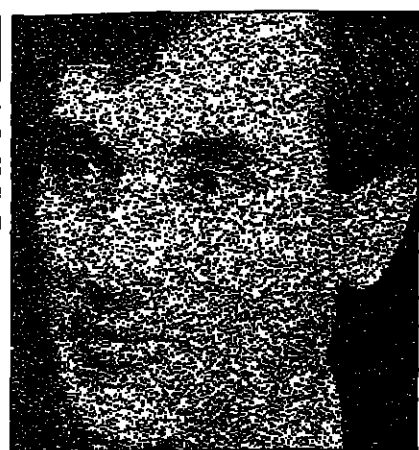
Michael Howard

**Profile:** Aged 55, Home Secretary - right-winger; impeccable Euro-sceptic, with long-term hostility to federal Europe. Campaign strategy: rubber chicken circuit in safe Tory seats; leading Cabinet Euro-rebel: the man to stand up to Ken Clarke. Careful to avoid being seen as disloyal. Form: cunning runner, favourite for the big race. Odds 2:1 on.



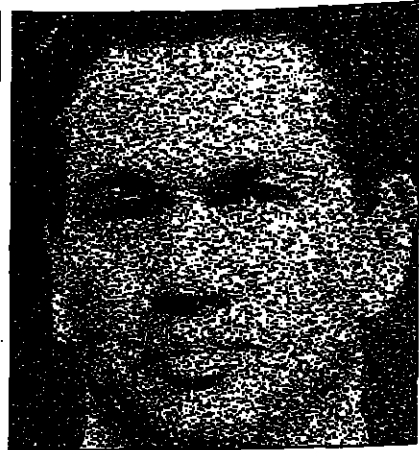
Malcolm Rifkind

**Profile:** Aged 50, Foreign Secretary - Majorite centrist, trimming to the Euro-sceptic right. Campaign strategy: uses FO as platform for world statesman image; made big impression with speech on new Atlantic alliance with America. Form: dark horse, coming strong but could fall at first fence - his majority in Edinburgh Pentlands a vulnerable 4,290. Odds 10:1



John Redwood

**Profile:** Aged 45 - Thatcherite Euro-sceptic with a penchant for populism - done all the running since resigning from Cabinet. Campaign strategy: has met every backbench Tory MP from the 1992 intake in assiduous campaign to dispel "Vulcan" image. Lost against Major but showed metal. Form: a stayer, who could still come through. Second favourite. Odds - 4:1



Michael Portillo

**Profile:** Aged 43, Secretary of State for Defence - hard-right Thatcherite torch bearer. Campaign strategy: keeping head down since "gaffe" about SAS at party conference. Assiduously courts loyal friends on Euro-sceptic right. Form: few outings make it difficult to judge, but has still has eye on main prize. Younger than the rest of the field. Odds - 4:1



Gillian Shephard

**Profile:** Aged 56, Secretary of State for Education and Employment - a Majorite ready to show the men a thing or two. Campaign strategy: the Joan of Arc of the Cabinet, fighting Ken Clarke for more money for schools; Major over his demands for more grammar schools. Form: doughy fighter with no realistic chance of winning. But they said that about Thatcher. Odds - 100:1.

## Dorrell first out of stalls in leadership race

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Stephen Dorrell yesterday stole a march on the rest of the field for the Tory leadership contest - Michael Howard, Malcolm Rifkind, Michael Portillo, Gillian Shephard and John Redwood - by allowing "friends" to claim that he wanted to see a fundamental shift in the Tory position on Europe.

Only a week before, it was reported that Mr Howard had been planning to use an early opportunity to call for renegotation of Britain's position in Europe. By going public first, Mr Dorrell succeeded in outflanking the Home Secretary.

Any doubt that a leadership contest is already under way should be dispelled by Mr Howard's diary for 1996 - he spoke at more constituency association lunches and dinners than any other Cabinet minister in the past three months.

Central Office said his work rate with the constituencies had almost doubled. Some Tory MPs are already informally working for his election as leader.

Mr Howard was responsible for bringing to a head the internal tensions in the Cabinet on Europe at two highly charged Cabinet meetings last month. The Home Secretary ambushed Kenneth Clarke at a Cabinet meeting on 5 December with a demand that the Chancellor should produce a paper on the convergence criteria for the single European currency.

There were briefings by "friends" of Mr Howard, which clearly showed that he was the man to stand up to Mr Clarke. However, Mr Clarke then pulled a trick on the Cabinet. Ministers had been expecting a paper in the new year but the Chancellor delivered it at a meeting on 19 December.

His paper was torn to shreds by his colleagues and the Chancellor was ordered to return with a fresh paper in the new year. The significant factor was the number of ministers who now sided with Mr Howard. Mr Dorrell was among them. Others who chipped in included Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education.

Mr Clarke was able to claim a victory, because the Cabinet agreed to stick to the existing policy on Europe, but the impression was of a chancellor at bay. The intervention by Mr Dorrell was seen as an attempt by John Major to force Mr Clarke to move from the existing "wait and see" approach to a single currency, which the Euro-sceptics said yesterday was "untenable" for the election.

It will not be the first time Mr Major has used Mr Dorrell as his stalking horse. Last summer, Mr Dorrell called for a referendum on Europe when it was being resisted by the Chancellor. Within a few weeks, Mr Major had persuaded Mr Clarke to accept it. By using Mr Dorrell, the Prime Minister could engineer a change of policy without risking a direct conflict between himself and his Chancellor.

The difficulty for Mr Major is to reach an agreed policy without forcing resignations from the pro-Clarke wing of the Tory party. The greatest fear among the Euro-sceptics is that they will be blamed for an election defeat.

Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence called for "unity, unity, unity" at the 1996 party conference. The aim was to close Cabinet ranks against the former minister Mr Redwood and backbench Euro-sceptics who were putting their principles above the party's election chances. Mr Redwood has since gone relatively quiet.

But the ground is moving under the Chancellor who is becoming more isolated in the Cabinet. Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, has stood by the Chancellor, but also has his own eye on the leadership election. Mr Major is likely to call his next door neighbour for a chat soon, to discuss the idea raised by Mr Dorrell.

## Departing MPs head for the real world

Frank Abrams  
Political Correspondent

The worlds of banking, public affairs consultancy and the law are, presumably, looking forward to a boost this year as more than 150 MPs head out of the House of Commons and back into the real world.

With almost 60 Conservative members retiring, and as many again likely to lose their seats, the exodus is likely to take on a distinctly blue hue. Just 26 Labour MPs are retiring, along with six Liberal Democrats and one Ulster Unionist.

In six months time, a quarter of the seats in the Commons will be filled by newcomers. While some of their previous incumbents will continue to haunt the precincts of Westminster, unable to tear themselves away, others will fade quietly into the background. A few, but probably only a few, will emerge into public life in another field.

Most of those leaving will say they are going because of advancing age or ill-health, but one or two have already found lucrative bolt-holes. The former transport minister Steven Norris will earn £150,000 per year as a director of the Road Haulage Association. He has already announced that he is leaving politics "for very straightforward financial reasons".

But what will become of those MPs who will fight to the last to keep their seats? Is there life for them after Westminster?

George Walden, former education minister and Conservative MP for Buckingham, believes there is. He will retire at the general election, aged 55, but is not worried that he will

find it difficult to leave. He is looking forward to revising an interest in Russia and China that he developed in a former life as a diplomat. As a former chair of the Booker prize and as co-author with his wife of a book on art history, he has plenty of outside interests.

"I think the routine of the Commons is really quite nice for people to sort of moulder into, and that is a very good reason for moving on. It is full of real-



ly rather good people operating a defunct system," he says.

Others find the break with politics harder to make. Sir Gerrard Nicks, lost his North Cornwall seat in 1992 and went back to his law practice. However, he did not move far - his office is across the road from the Commons and his firm represents a number of MPs.

As the occupant of a marginal seat he was always philosophical about losing it during the 13 years he spent in Westminster. "I think mentally I was prepared

for it pretty well, as was my wife. But it's very difficult to prepare yourself emotionally because of the commitment which is there right up to the last day. But people are made redundant in all sorts of walks of life where they are equally committed," he says.

Michael Knowles, who had a majority of 500 in Nottingham East before the 1992 election, also knew he was likely to lose. But the world of sales, in which he had worked before, had moved on so drew on his political experience and set up his own public affairs company.

"Being an MP was an episode in a life in politics. Would I rather be there? Of course I would. But it can never be taken away from you. It's the biggest single honour anyone can have," he says.

Small wonder, then, that so many MPs are reluctant to leave. Ten sitting MPs, seven Conservative, two Labour and one the Tory defector Alan Howarth, are still looking for new seats either because they have not been re-elected or because their seats are disappearing in boundary changes.

There are also many who itch to return to the fold. Among the new Conservative intake next spring will be three senior figures who lost their seats in 1992. Michael Fallon, former education minister, will return as member for Sevenoaks in Kent. John Maples, former deputy chairman, will take up Mr Howarth's Stratford-on-Avon seat and Francis Maude, former trade, Foreign Office and Treasury minister, will become the member for Horsham in Sussex.

## Major's first battle cry set for the ides of March

Colin Brown

The Conservative Central Council in Bath on 14 and 15 March has been pencilled in by John Major as the ideal launch date for the General Election.

Ministerial sources said last night that current planning is for the key speakers to be limited to the Prime Minister, to Michael Heseltine, his deputy, and to Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman.

"That makes it look more likely that Major wants to use it to start the election campaign," said one Whitehall source.

The Central Council, offering a platform for Mr Major to give a rallying call to party workers and agents from all over Britain, could provide the springboard for an election on 10 April or 1 May.

The Ulster Unionists may upset his well-laid plans for an election timed to coincide with the implementation of the budget tax cuts on 1 April, and better spring weather. If the Ulster Unionists, led by David Trimble, appear ready to force an early election, the Prime Minister may still try to beat them to the punch by calling an election on 20 March. Tory backbenchers

said yesterday that Mr Major may not be a strategist, but he is a master tactician. They expect him to navigate his way to a date of his own choosing.

The other hurdles which could upset his planning include the by-election in Wirral South following the death of Tory MP Barry Porter. Mr Major does not want to go to the country after losing another seat, and, by convention, can delay the by-election for three months. Labour is planning to force the election in March, if it has not been called by the Tories.

The X-factor in Mr Major's plans is the state of his own party. After a row about cheating by government whips, Labour has withdrawn all "pairing" co-operation. "We will force ministers to come back from trips to vote," said a Labour source.

The battle will begin as soon as MPs return on 13 January from their New Year's break with the remaining stages of the Bill on fixed sentencing. The big hurdle is the Finance Bill, which will be given a second reading on 14 January. A government source said the odds against Labour defeating the Government on it, and forcing an election, were 4:1. Enough perhaps for a flutter by Tony Blair.

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# Tide turns at last on Britain's dirty beaches

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

The United Kingdom's resort beaches are becoming cleaner and better managed, giving the great British seaside holiday a better than ever chance of reviving, according to the Tidy Britain Group.

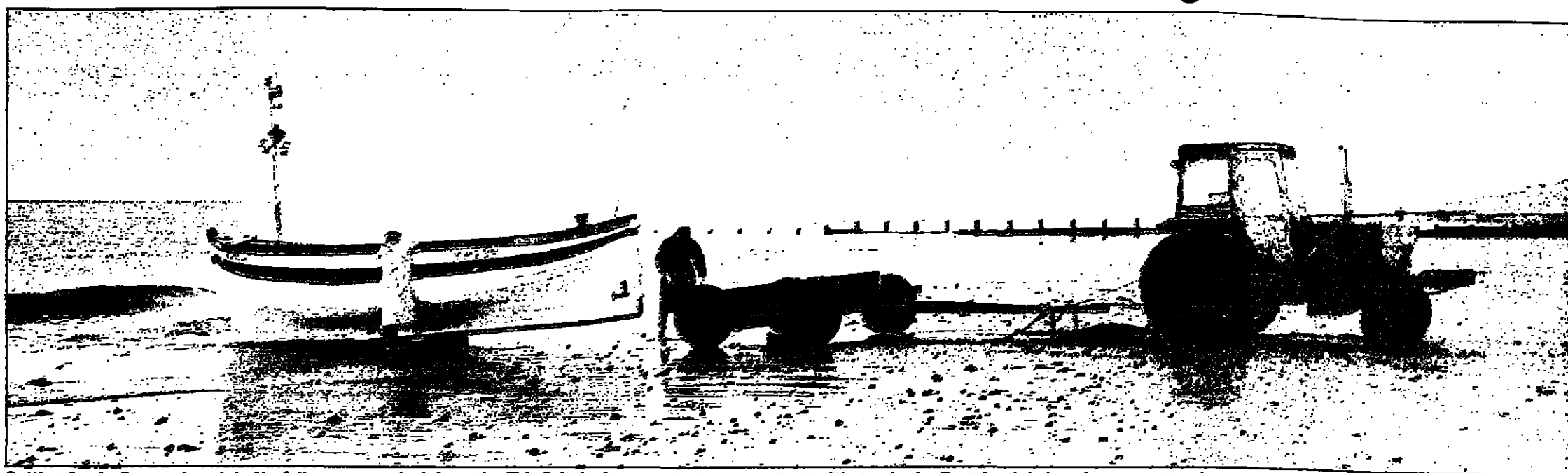
Having carefully surveyed 139 beaches last August, the height of the holiday season, the group sees unmistakable signs of improvement.

Its inspectors graded beaches as A, B, C or D based on how well they scored in access, cleanliness and litter control on shore, safety in the water, control of dogs, facilities and recreation, maintenance and public information. Grades C and D were deemed "unsatisfactory".

A grade A was given to 41 beaches, of which Bournemouth's are the most popular. Brighton was a B and Blackpool's north and south beaches were Cs.

Eleven resorts – 8 per cent – were assessed as grade D, including Southport on Merseyside. East Anglia had the cleanest beaches and the most improved ones, while the North-west was the region with the worst. None of its beaches had a grade A.

Trevor Dickson, who headed the survey, said it showed a big improvement on 1995. Ten more resorts had achieved a grade A and two-thirds of all the beaches inspected were either in that category or grade B. "We're encouraged," he said. "We feel the findings of earlier surveys have been well received by the local councils



Getting fresh: Cromer beach in Norfolk won a grade A from the Tidy Britain Group and also meets basic EU standards. East Anglia's beaches were the cleanest in the survey

Photograph: Bryn Colton

pointed the water industry and the Government, because since privatisation about £2bn has been sent on coastal sewage schemes, largely to comply with an EU directive setting maxi-

mum sewage bacteria levels. The water companies now say there are other sources of sewage pollution such as buildings with their own sewage outfalls and farms.

Blackpool central and north beaches met the EU's basic standard for the first time this year, thanks to a £150m improvement scheme. But the resort's south beach still failed.

Mr Dickson said sewage pollution in water had been given undue weight over the cleanliness and good management of beaches on shore. "Our surveys find that the great majority of

people go to the beach to sunbathe, enjoy the fresh air and views and to walk, not to go in the water," he said.

Nonetheless, 31 United Kingdom beaches had now been

awarded the European Blue Flag, nearly twice the number for 1995. The flag is given to beaches that are clean and well run on shore and whose water meets the most stringent EU standard.

## Bathing at its best

The following 13 beaches were judged Grade A in the Tidy Britain Group's onshore survey, but they also have European Blue Flags, which means they meet the European Union's highest bathing-water quality standard.

England: Sheringham, Norfolk; Southwold, Suffolk; Sheerness Beach Street and Leysdown Grove Avenue in Kent; Bournemouth, Poole Sandbanks and Swanage Central in Dorset; Oddicombe, Devon; Sennen

Cove and Porthmeor St Ives in Cornwall.

Scotland: St Andrews West Sands; Aberdour Silver Sands. Wales: Pembrey Country Park, Tenby North.

## Small holiday firms offer best deals

Glenda Cooper

People are more happy with their holidays if they book through small specialist tour operators, while some of the largest names are among the worst in delivering customer satisfaction.

According to a survey of 11,500 Consumers' Association members for *Holiday Which?* the high street giants Airtours, First Choice and Inspirations came bottom of more than 50 tour operators.

The small independents Swiss Travel Service and VFB Holidays were the most popular. Value for money was not only about cost, said holiday-makers. They rated some top names, who tend to be cheaper, lower down the league.

Thomson, which owns the companies through which 60 per cent of all package holidays are booked, beat its two main rivals for customer satisfaction. About 48 per cent of its customers would recommend the company, compared to 28 per cent for First Choice and 25 per cent for Airtours.

Accommodation was often a source of dissatisfaction: one in 14 readers thought standards could have been better. And while three-quarters who travelled with Swiss Travel Service, P&O Cruises, Style and Hayes & Jarvis were satisfied, less than half were satisfied with Airtours, First Choice, Sunworld, Cosmos and Skytours.

The survey also found that one in seven people were unhappy with their holiday representative, and in the worst cases the figure rose to one in five. One in 25 felt they had been misled by brochures.

For long-haul travel, Virgin Holidays remains the favourite, followed by Travelsphere, Titan HiTours and Kuoni. Airtours, Unifirst, First Choice and Thomson trailed.

Patricia Yates, editor of *Holiday Which?*, said: "These results show again that your choice of tour operator is just as crucial as your choice of resort and you are more likely to get a holiday that matches your expectations if you stick to an independent tour operator."

But Airtours accused *Holiday Which?* of "applying pop science to holidays". It argued that the people that responded to the survey represented 0.03 per cent of holidaymakers who choose to travel with the company.

Despite tragedies such as the Lockerbie bombing, many countries have not introduced legislation requiring screening of all hold baggage on international flights, said *Holiday Which?* About 8,000 unaccompanied bags find their way onto international flights every year. The UK, however, is leading the way in airport technology. Ten of the world's 25 CTX5000 screening machines, used to detect plastic explosives, are installed in Manchester Airport.

## DAILY POEM

### The Butter-Print

By Seamus Heaney

Who carved on the butter-print's round open face  
A cross-hatched head of rye, all jags and bristles?  
Why should soft butter bear that sharp device  
As if its breast were scored with slivered glass?

When I was small I swallowed an awn of rye.  
My throat was like standing crop probed by a scythe.  
I felt the edge slide and the point stick deep  
Until, when I coughed and coughed and coughed it up,

My breathing came down-cold, so clear and sudden  
I might have been inhaling air from heaven  
Where healed and martyred Agatha stares down  
At the relic knife as I stared at the awn.

This poem comes from Seamus Heaney's new volume *The Spirit Level* (Faber), which appears on the shortlist for the TS Eliot Prize and is Heaney's first collection for five years. In the intervening period, he has served as Professor of Poetry at Oxford and published his lectures there as *The Redress of Poetry* (Faber). Last year, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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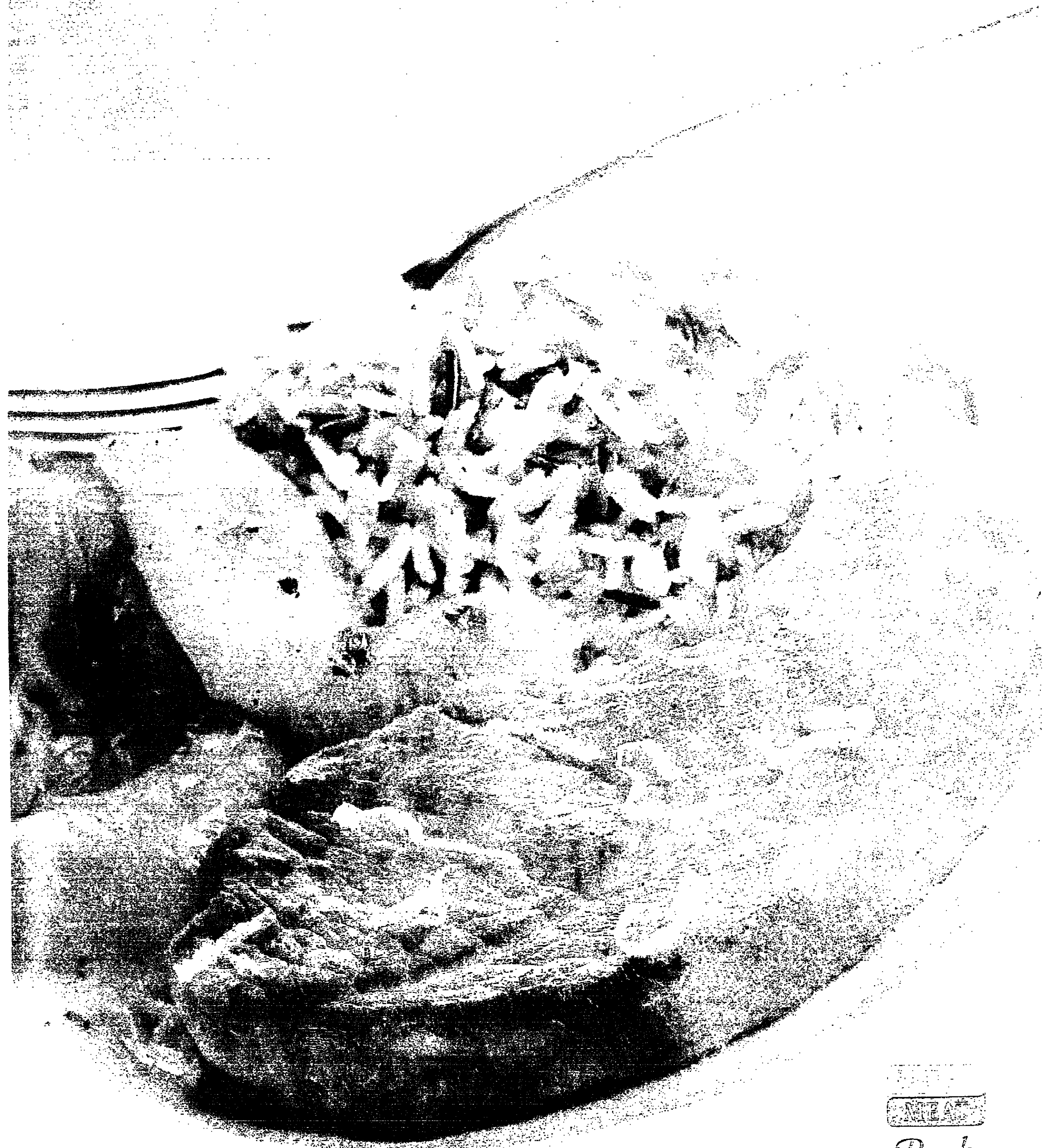




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## THE HONG KONG HANDOVER

## The colony's last tango dancer



Old order and the new: Hong Kong's last governor, Chris Patten, stands outside his residence against a background of gleaming skyscrapers

As the countdown begins, Governor

STEPHEN VINES  
Hong Kong

Chris Patten, the 28th and last Governor of Hong Kong, is, to put it mildly, in a feisty mood. With only six months to go before he sails out of the colony on the royal yacht *Britannia*, he has the appearance of a man with nothing to lose and who has a few things that he would like to get off his chest.

Some of his critics would say that Mr Patten has gone out of his way to provoke opposition, especially during the last few months.

"It's not an argument one can win", he objects. "If you do nothing, you're washing your hands of Hong Kong; if you try to do it yourself, you're grandstanding. I've spent half my time in Hong Kong with people accusing Britain, and I suppose me, of selling out Hong Kong to British commercial interests and the other half dealing with people who say we should have sold out Hong Kong to commercial interests. Neither of which is true."

The recent introduction of legislation on subversion, which has taken place right at the end of colonial rule, has excited Chinese fury and a promise by Peking that the new law will be repealed. So, is he merely grandstanding in order to make Britain look good?

Mr Patten insists that Britain tried to secure the Chinese government's agreement but could not, and therefore was compelled unilaterally to draft a law that it had pledged to bring onto the statute books. He says that even if the legislation does not survive "we've at least established

a benchmark against which anything else can be judged".

Mr Patten was appointed in 1992 as the last Governor of Hong Kong, just after winning a General Election for the Conservative Party leader John Major but losing his own seat.

The appointment was seen as a rejection of the "old China hands" in the Foreign Office and Cabinet Office who sometimes appeared to be ready to mollify Peking at almost any cost.

Although he maintained the colony's "executive-led" government, he outraged both the Chinese government and the business and professional elite in Hong Kong by giving ordinary people a greater say in the running of the territory.

Mr Patten went as far as he could, within the bounds set by the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong, to make the 1995 Legislative Council election the freest in the colony's history.

However, that was too far for China, which has chosen its own provisional council to replace the legislature as soon as it gains control in July.

It has also ensured that Mr Patten's term as Governor has been punctuated by a constant stream of abuse from China. In fact, he relishes some of the more colourful epithets that have been thrown his way, mockingly referring to himself as "the tango dancer" or "the triple violator".

But China's hostility has also meant that obstacles have been put in the way of several crucial projects, such as the new airport at Chek Lap Kok.

## Humiliating history feeds an obsession with race

Teresa Poole  
Peking

"The Chinese people have stood up and will finally wash away a century of national disgrace." Thus does China anticipate the return of Hong Kong to "the motherland", an event which will purge "a national shame that cannot be forgotten". According to nationalist propaganda, 1997 marks the end of the country's "humiliation" by foreign powers. "When China becomes strong, nobody in the world will dare to bully us," a Chinese Communist Party magazine thundered recently.

The image of mainland China, humbled by foreign powers over 150 years and now reasserting itself, is one which requires constant reminders of past "humiliations" in order to inspire present-day patriotism.

Professor Lucian Pye, a Sinologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argues: "It is a xenophobic nationalism, one

tors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force."

Frank Dikötter, of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, points out: "Chinese nationalism has been based on ideas of descent. The Yellow Emperor was a significant founding myth in Chinese nationalism at the beginning of this century; today references are more often made to Peking Man and other archaeological findings that are claimed to indicate that the Chinese have separate origins from the rest of mankind."

Mr Dikötter, author of a book on nationalism in China to be published next year, adds: "One does not become Chinese like one becomes Swiss or Dutch, since cultural integration (language) or political adoption (passport) are both excluded as means of becoming 'Chinese'."

This narrow definition has been keenly felt by Indian and Pakistani families in Hong Kong, many of whom have been resident for generations, but will not qualify for post-1997 Hong Kong passports because they are not ethnic Chinese.

Ethnicity is entwined with a tendency always to blame foreign countries. Patriotic instruction in China today dwells at length on the wrongs of the 19th century, the "Unequal Treaties" with Britain and the Japanese occupation. As part of the 1 July celebrations this year, a lavish mainland film, *The Opium Wars*, will have its premiere in China and Hong Kong.

China's obsession with historical injustice paradoxically may be linked to the fact that it was never truly colonised, unlike India and Indonesia. Mr Pye explained: "The twenty ports were a Chinese invention to keep the 'barbarian' cooped up. But the humiliation was that the Chinese flocked to the treaty ports, and prospered."

There is a parallel with Hong Kong, and China's threats against the British to open the border - enabling eager mainlanders to flood into the colony. "Today you have more talk in China about the 150 years of foreign humiliation than in India, Indonesia, or Burma, for example. They have all been able to grow out of this, but China is somehow clinging to it," says Mr Pye.

The basis for a mature nationalism has fallen foul of political upheavals. Mr Pye argues: "You have had 40 years of the Chinese Communist Party denouncing as an abomination all that was great in Chinese civilisation. And now they turn round and wonder, what have we got left? Where are our ideals, where are our values? And there aren't any, except for a sort of racist instinct."

Mr Pye has little doubt about China's response if the Hong Kong transition does not go smoothly. "They will have to find scapegoats - and it will be

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Sun Yat-sen: 'The greatest force is common blood'

lacking higher ideals, principles or visions. The test of nationalism is not just its capacity to mobilise people. Equally important is whether it sets standards that can govern the rulers."

Outside the mainland, Chinese nationalism is still being a powerful mobilising force. This was shown in last year's protests in Taiwan and Hong Kong against Japan's claim to the Diaoyu islands.

Modern Chinese nationalism has its roots among the late-19th century reformers who opposed the ruling Manchu dynasty and wished to unite the Chinese people against the foreign powers in China.

It presented an unashamedly racial view of what it was to be Chinese. Sun Yat-sen, the father of post-imperial China in 1911, wrote in the *Three Principles of the People*: "The greatest force is common blood. The Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the blood stock of the yellow race. The blood of ances-

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# cer prepares to take the final bow

## Patten defends Britain's flawed legacy

He believes that most people "found here a refuge which was characterised by the decency and freedoms of British civil society, and even though only in the last decade has Hong Kong started to see democratic development, it's been for many years one of the freest societies in Asia. Britain has provided the infrastructure within which Chinese entrepreneurial genius and hard work could flower and flourish."

So what will he be doing for the next six months? It has been suggested that as a lame-duck head of government, he might as well stay at home and put his feet up. Yet his diary is packed and he seems determined to oversee the completion of his social and educational programmes.

"I have been committed to the issue of the protection of civil liberties and democratic development but I've set out a whole range of other social and economic items on the agenda which I have tried to ensure are implemented. Sometimes, as a consequence, I've been rather curiously described as a Socialist."

Never the less, he is realistic. "It would be ludicrous for me not to recognise that the last six months is the last six months. I mean, people aren't going to be looking to me for reassurance about the future as they are going to be looking to C.H."

The Governor says he gets on well with Mr Tung personally. "We've worked together while disagreeing", he says, referring to the time that his successor spent as a member of his cabinet.

Aside from the personal relationship, "we're going to have to minimise rather than maximise the difficulties". Among the difficulties is China's establishment of a puppet legislature to rival the existing Legislative Council. "If the provisional legislature is given a great raft of things to do before 1 July 1997, it will be just aggravating a problem deliberately for political reasons", he asserts, perhaps suggesting that the difficulties will not be inconsiderable.

Mr Patten will not be offering advice to his successor unless asked. He is very well aware that any hint of endorsement from himself will be taken in Peking as a black mark against Mr Tung. His advice includes the suggestion that "the democrats need to be involved with governing and running Hong Kong". This sort of talk is heresy in Peking's ruling circles.

And what of his own future? "I find the suggestions, sometimes made, that you can drop in and out of Westminster politics as though the House of Commons was the RAC Club, both politically naive and extremely presumptuous. I don't know whether I want to set my hat at trying to resume a career in party politics and even if I do, I recognise all the problems." Meanwhile he will be retiring to France and writing a book about Asia, "which I've got to get out of my system".

He will be leaving the luxuries of a large staff at Government House to tend his garden, to learn how to use his computer and get that book written. It is hard not to believe that he is ticking off the days.

Leading article, page 17



Democracy in danger: Police restrain activists outside the inaugural meeting of the selection committee choosing Hong Kong's first Peking-appointed ruler

## Question marks hanging over the future

What will happen to the British connection with Hong Kong - will it simply end on 1 July 1997?

No. The government insists that Britain has a residual responsibility, in part as a signatory to the treaty under which Hong Kong reverts to Chinese rule and in part because a Sino-British Joint Liaison Group, responsible for transitional issues, will remain in operation until 1 January 2000.

What happens to the Queen's head on stamps and coins?

All royal insignia will go: the Queen's head has already gone from new coins. Red letter boxes with the royal crest will be phased out and in will come the Bauhinia symbol, drawn from Hong Kong's national flower. It is a sterile hybrid which produces no seed.

What about all the institutions designated as royal?

With the exception of the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, all other royal-named bodies, including the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, are rushing to drop the honour like a bad smell.

Will British-related monuments and road names remain?

Problematic. The Brits have named almost every road after a British functionary. China has said nothing about changing these names, but in neighbouring Portuguese Macau, China has insisted on the removal of "colonial" statues.

What about the old colonial buildings?

What old colonial buildings? Commerce has taken its toll on most of them. Chris Patten joked that the Governor's house would be turned into a museum of colonialism. At any rate Tung Chee-hwa, Mr Patten's successor, does not want to live there.

Will any British armed forces stay in Hong Kong?

The garrison will wind down in the next few months. The rest will have to be out of the colony immediately after the handover. They will probably be put aboard vessels accompanying HMS Britannia out of Hong Kong.

Will Britons still have the right to visit Hong Kong?

Brits will still be allowed in without a visa but will no longer be free to work or study. Like other foreigners they will have to obtain special permits.

What about British passport holders in Hong Kong?

Those of non-Chinese origin will simply be treated as foreigners. Ethnic Chinese holders of UK passports will not be recognised as British citizens by the Chinese government but will be regarded as Chinese citizens.

Will there be freedom of speech and of the media?

In theory, this is guaranteed under the Basic Law; but senior Chinese officials have warned there will be no freedom to criticise the Chinese government, advocate independence, or criticise individual leaders.

And the legal system?

This, too, is supposed to remain unchanged, right down to the use of wigs and flowing robes. Understandably, the Chinese language will get a bigger airing in the courts. The real problem is the independence of the judiciary. China has reserved the right to have the last say on determining basic constitutional issues and has limited the autonomy of the court of final appeal.

## A lease no one thought would run out

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Considering that China could have taken Hong Kong back at any time and that Britain has long been a reluctant colonial power in its last major overseas territory, why is the colony reverting to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July 1997?

In formal terms the answer lies in the second Convention of Peking, signed on 9 June 1898. The ailing Qing Dynasty leased the New Territories to Britain for 99 years, starting 1 July 1898. The new additions were to make up 90 per cent of Hong Kong's land mass. The term of 99 years was fixed almost casually. Both sides believed the new lands would remain British for ever, along with the original colonial possession of Hong Kong island, acquired in 1842. The British empire would never die.

The lease was signed in the midst of a flurry of European colonial expansion in China. Britain did not want to be left out, but it was prepared to let China's rulers save face by not insisting the territory should be ceded in perpetuity.

As early as 1909 Governor Sir Frederick Lugard suggested the New Territories be ceded permanently to Britain as a condition for the return of the British concession of Weihaiwei to China. In the event, Weihaiwei was returned to China in 1930, without any of the conditions suggested by Sir Frederick two decades previously.

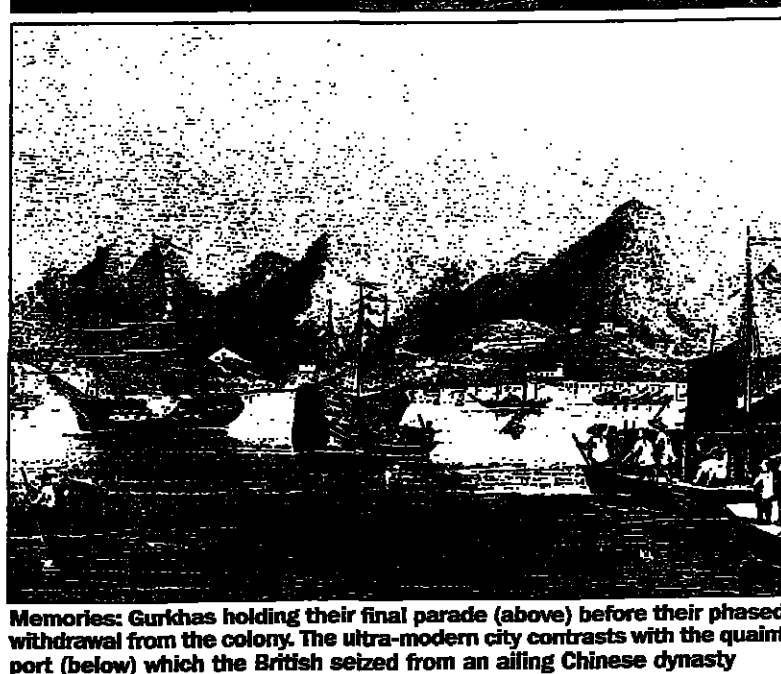
When the Qing Dynasty fell and the nationalist government was installed, it declared it would not accept the "unequal treaties" that gave Hong Kong to Britain. The nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, with the support of the United States, put pressure on Britain to hand Hong Kong back after the Second World War but Churchill would have none of it.

After the Chinese Revolution, the leaders in Peking had to deal more pressing business than the recovery of Hong Kong. Indeed the territory's existence as a British colony had its uses in providing the Chinese mainland with a window on the rest of the world.

It was not until the mid-1970s that China and Britain started to think about the future of Hong Kong's colonial status. Formally China insisted that it would only take Hong Kong back "when the time is right". It suited China to turn a blind eye to the reality of British sovereignty, while stating that it did not accept the colonial status quo.

It is likely that the Communist Party decided to resume sovereignty following the expiry of the New Territories lease in 1976-7. However the decision was only made known to Britain in March 1979, during a visit to Peking by Sir Murray (now Lord) Maclehoze, the Governor. Britain was careful not to let this decision be known and China also kept quiet about it. Some thought had been given to the idea that Britain might maintain its presence in the portion of the colony that was ceded in perpetuity. In the end, Hong Kong without the New Territories was not considered a viable option.

By 1982 negotiations for the return of Hong Kong were effectively under way. Two years of tough bargaining followed, leading to the signing of a Sino-British Joint Declaration under which Britain would withdraw from Hong Kong on July 1 1997.



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# Serbian church leaders turn on Milosevic

Andrew Gumbel  
Belgrade

The Serbian Orthodox Church, once an ardent supporter of President Slobodan Milosevic's nationalist ambitions in the Balkans, yesterday added its voice to the groundswell of public opinion turning against the government with a withering attack on what it called a "Communist, Godless and Satanic" regime.

An unambiguous statement of support for the anti-government protests, now into their eighth week, was read out at the regular afternoon opposition rally in central Belgrade to a rapturous reception.

"He [Milosevic] has already

set up against the whole world and now he wants to pit us against each other and trigger bloodshed in order to preserve power," said the statement, was drawn up by the Church's governing Synod at an emergency session earlier in the day and signed by Patriarch Pavle.

The Church has had its share of problems with Mr Milosevic because his government refused to return property confiscated by Tito's Communists in 1945 and failed to encourage the growth of religious schools. But in the run-up to the 1991-95 war it threw its weight behind Mr Milosevic's expansionist ambitions, seeing the dream of a Greater Serbia as an opportunity for an Orthodox revival.

Yesterday's statement was still nationalist in tone, accusing Mr Milosevic of betraying Serbs in Bosnia and the Krajina region now reconquered by Croatia. But it was a significant indication of the way in which public opinion is moving away from Mr Milosevic. In recent days, scores of judges, university professors and other prominent officials have come out openly in favour of the anti-government protests.

On New Year's Day, the Writers' Union, which initially applauded Mr Milosevic in the 1980s, issued a fierce attack saying the president was the "enemy of Serbia". The union has revived its famous "protest evenings" — originally estab-



Man of the people: Serb opposition leader Vuk Draskovic surrounded by supporters at anti-government rally in Belgrade

Photograph: Reuter

lished to bring together dissidents of Tito's regime.

On the streets of Belgrade, tens of thousands of people again turned up yesterday to repeat the demands they have

been making since late November: for Mr Milosevic to acknowledge the victory scored by the opposition coalition Zajedno [together] in elections for city councils across the country.

Although the numbers were relatively modest, partly because of the bitter ice and cold and partly because of a menacing presence of armed riot police a few streets away from

Republic Square, the focus of rallies and protesters was infused with a new spirit of optimism. Opposition political parties hoped that Mr Milosevic was on the verge of accepting the results of an inquiry by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) into the local elections and grant the opposition the victories it has been claiming. Mr Milosevic had been due to respond to the OSCE survey by yesterday, but it is now believed he will make a statement today or on Monday.

He has shrouded himself in silence in recent days, permitting no reference to the demonstrations either in his own communiqués or on state media. His New Year message to the nation referred only to his intention of liberalising the

economy in an effort to pull the country out of a deep slump exacerbated by war and four-and-a-half years of international sanctions that have yet to be completely lifted.

While Mr Milosevic's message was broadcast, hundreds of thousands of Belgraders thronged into the streets in their hundreds of thousands — an unmistakable political statement despite the overtly festive motive for the gathering.

Yesterday, the atmosphere remained good-humoured, with demonstrators cheering, setting off firecrackers and blowing through brightly coloured party whistles, while loudspeakers blasted out the frenetic, wildly energetic gypsy music from *Underground*, Emir Kusturica's prize-winning film about the wars in Yugoslavia.

## Muslim and Serb homes torched

Sarajevo (Reuters) — Nato reported yesterday that at least a dozen houses formerly inhabited by Bosnian Muslims or Serbs were destroyed over the past week in a Croat-held area near Mostar.

The attacks were clearly aimed at discouraging non-Croat refugees from returning to settlements south of Mostar, human rights workers said.

Five houses once inhabited by Muslims were destroyed in Stolic on Sunday night and another house was torched on Monday, said Major Tony White, spokesman for the Nato-led peace force.

Three houses in nearby Kulavac were also destroyed on Sunday, two homes belonging to Serbs were razed in Stolic at

the weekend and explosions had damaged a house in the village of Prebilovci on Monday, Major White said.

The reports coincide with an alarming rise in expulsions of Muslims from Croat-controlled western Mostar over the past three months.

Groups of armed men have been systematically evicting the remaining Muslims from western Mostar and seizing their flats, according to United Nations relief workers and international police monitors.

Mostar is strictly divided into Croat and Muslim sectors since a 10-month Muslim-Croat war ended in 1994. Croat authorities have failed to put a stop to the expulsions despite repeated pleas from Western diplomats.

## Huge losses in Albania savings fraud

Miranda Vickers  
Tirana

Almost everybody in Albania has queued up in recent months, in the hope of gaining a share of the goodies. Now, however, huge numbers — one in seven families, according to some estimates — face financial ruin, pending the collapse of the country's plethora of pyramid-savings schemes.

Already one company is on the verge of collapse, with thousands of desperate people besieging its office in central Tirana and demanding their promised interest returns. When no payouts were forthcoming, angry crowds smashed the windows of the company's office before they were dispersed by police.

Albania has been in the grip of investment fever, with companies borrowing money from people and paying them extraordinary high monthly interest rates, ranging from 8 per cent to a literally unbelievable 35 per cent. The pyramid schemes rely on a stream of new deposits to pay out interest on the old ones, and this requires an ever-increasing flow of cash.

The World Bank and the IMF have called on the government to exert strict control over the pyramid schemes. Meanwhile, however, almost every Albanian family has invested some money in one pyramid scheme or another. Over the last few months, gullible investors have queued from the early hours of the morning to deposit their savings. Many have even sold their homes to invest as large a sum as possible.

The schemes are a powerful magnet, providing a glimmer of hope in a country with an average monthly wage of only £55 and high unemployment.

"It is worth taking the risk," said one stallholder, Arben Shekriu, whose brother has sold his flat and moved his family back into the parental home. "We will all be able to share the money earned from my brother's deposit," he said hopefully.

In the centre of Tirana, the office of Vefa Holdings, the largest and most powerful of the money-lending schemes, shoots beams of white light over the rooftops, a symbol of the brash new capitalism pervading Albania's post-communist society. Vefa, which is thought to have attracted around £50m, offers investors monthly interest rates of 8 per cent on six-month deposits.

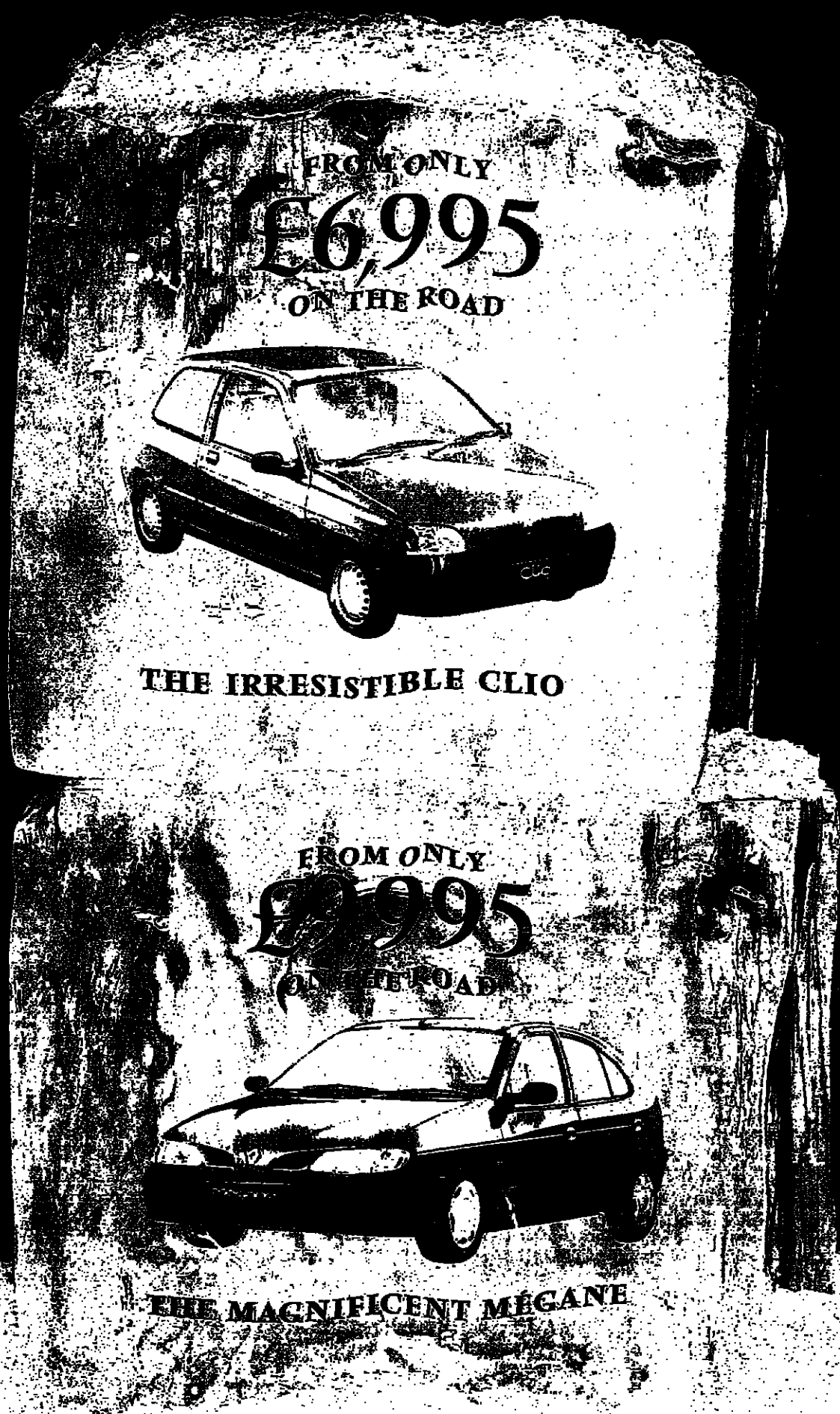
Interest rates jumped sharply following a statement by the Finance Minister, Ridvan Bode, warning of the potential catastrophe facing Albania should the schemes collapse. He cast doubt on the ability of the pyramid firms to return the sums deposited with them and to continue to pay out such high interest rates.

The statement, however, only fuelled the various schemes' competitiveness, and several firms immediately increased their interest rates. One firm reduced the permitted withdrawal period from seven to three months and trebled the rate of return, another announced that all deposits lodged with it would earn 32 per cent in just 55 days.

Despite growing speculation that these money schemes will not be able to pay out to savers, Albanians continue to stand patiently, awaiting their turn to lodge their precious savings.

"We are like lambs to the slaughter," said economic analyst Albert Marku, despondently watching yet another queue.

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# Doctors warned against arming Arabs' attacker

Eric Silver  
Jerusalem

The Israeli army conscripted Noam Friedman, the religious soldier who shot seven Arabs in Hebron on Wednesday, despite a written warning from psychiatrists in his home town that he should not be trusted with a gun.

The religious newspaper, *Yom Hashishi*, yesterday published extracts from a letter sent to the draft board by his local education office in May 1995.

"It should be considered seriously whether to draft this man," his counsellors wrote, "and especially whether to place a weapon in his hands." Friedman was reported to have boasted afterwards that he had tricked the army into taking him. "Now," the paper quoted him as saying, "they will give me a weapon to shoot Arabs."

Friedman, 19, was remanded in custody yesterday. Police also charged a second soldier, Yuval Jilili, 1, with complicity in the shooting. Friedman told the court that he had wanted to show that the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, did not represent the Israeli people. He said he felt compelled to act to stop the gov-

ernment handing over most of Hebron to the Palestinians.

Unlike Yigal Amir, who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the Hebron mosque killer Baruch Goldstein, Friedman has been repudiated even by the Israeli right. He was too much of a loner, too obviously a psychiatric case.

"I don't expect him to become a cultural hero," Ehud Sprinzak, a Hebrew University expert on Israel's radical right, said. "There is a consensus within the settlements that he damaged their cause."

None the less, commentators pinned some of the responsibility on the religious right. "Even if the man acted on his own," wrote

## 'Bomb was Israeli'

Damascus (Agencies) — Syria said Israeli agents planted a bomb on a bus in Damascus on New Year's Eve, killing nine people and wounding others.

At least 40 people were taken to hospital. The attack followed attacks on Syrians in Lebanon, where right-wing Christians strongly oppose Syrian control over their government.

Nahum Barnea in the mass-circulation *Yedioth Aharonot*, "without orders from rabbis or politicians, the extreme right cannot be exempt from blame. In all sectors of this country, there are lunatics, but in only one sector do they turn weapons into a tool of politics."

The final negotiations for a Hebron redeployment were marking time last night. The Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, met until 3am yesterday, but failed to reach a consensus that would enable Mr Netanyahu and the Palestinian leader to meet and initial an agreement. It will probably have to wait over the weekend.

The main difference is over the timetable for further Israeli withdrawals — from West Bank rural areas — once the Hebron pull-out is completed. The Palestinians want Israel to keep to the original schedule, under which the evacuations were supposed to have started last September and finished in September 1997. Israel contends that the clock should restart from where it was stopped by last year's Islamist suicide bombings.

David Bar-Ilan, Mr Netanyahu's media adviser, last night accused the Palestinians of stalling.



Old enmity: An elderly Palestinian argues with Rabbi Moshe Levinger, one of the most prominent Jewish settlers in Hebron, in the market area of the town where Noam Friedman shot seven Arabs. Photograph: Reuters

## Delays that made history repeat itself in West Bank

It has happened before. Two years ago, Baruch Goldstein, an army reserve captain from the Israeli settlement at Kiryat Arba overlooking Hebron, killed 29 Palestinians as they prayed in the al-Ibrahimi mosque in the city. This week, Noam Friedman, another West Bank settler serving in the army, opened fire in Hebron's vegetable market 30 yards from where Goldstein caused his massacre.

The Oslo Accord, purported an agreement designed to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians, made such atrocities inevitable. It left more than 100,000 settlers in place on the West Bank, the hard core of whom said from the beginning that they would do everything they could to prevent Israeli withdrawal from any part of what they regarded as the land God gave to the Jews.

Oslo also encouraged attacks because it envisaged a long time-frame for its implementation — six years from its signing in 1993 to the end of final status negotiations in 1999. The justification for this was that resistance to such radical change could be less if it took place in stages. In practice, it gave plenty of time for opponents of Oslo, both Israeli and Palestinian, to derail it by bomb or bullet.

The nine months' delay in the

Ambiguities in the Oslo Accord have allowed extremists to flourish, writes Patrick Cockburn

Jerusalem, is 1.3 million. Of these, around 300,000 passed from Israeli security control when its forces withdrew from six towns at the end of 1995.

An Israeli redeployment in Hebron will mean a further 100,000 Palestinians will gain autonomy. The real change comes when Israeli forces withdraw from the Palestinian villages in rural areas where a further 900,000 Palestinians live. Under Oslo II this was meant to occur over 18 months, starting earlier this year. Until this happens, Israel will still be in a position to isolate each of the autonomous towns, creating the cantons Palestinians have always feared.

Professor Khalil Shikaki, a leading Palestinian political scientist, says: "Following the three further redeployments, the Israelis should be out of every part of the West Bank except Jerusalem as defined by its municipal boundaries, settlements as defined by their current areas and specific military locations". In other words, around 85 to 90 per cent of the West Bank would be in Palestinian hands. The interim agreement also opens up a right of passage between the 800,000 Palestinians in Gaza and those of the West Bank.

The addition of Hebron to the six other autonomous towns is important for Palestinians but not the central reason why they signed the interim agreement. The economic life of each can be strangled by an internal closure by Israel, which often means no more than putting checkpoints on the main access roads. The Palestinians also fear that if Mr Netanyahu persuades the US and the rest of the world that he has made major concessions over Hebron, international pressure on Israel to implement Oslo will relax.

Not everything can be blamed on Mr Netanyahu and his government. Mr Rabin was ambivalent about what Oslo really meant. He signed an agreement withdrawing Israeli troops from populated areas, but at the same time pushed ahead with the construction of a system of "by-pass" roads, designed to divert the West Bank more closely to Israel. The ambiguities in Oslo, designed to marginalise opposition, ended up offending everyone. The settlers saw an end to their dreams of taking over the Biblical land of Israel. Palestinians found themselves forced into impoverished ghettos. In a world of disappointed hopes, gunmen like Friedman were bound to flourish.



Baruch Goldstein: Murdered 29 Palestinians at prayer

implementation of the so-called interim agreement or Oslo II signed by Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and the previous Israeli government last year, has been portrayed as being largely about the Israeli withdrawal from Hebron. This was not the case. It was a partition of the city, and not on the rest of the interim agreement, which would see an end to Israeli predominance on the West Bank.

The redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron alone will not upset the balance of power on the West Bank. This will happen only when Israel carries out its three-stage withdrawal from rural areas as it is pledged to do under Oslo II. It is this that Mr Netanyahu has been raving to avoid.

The Palestinian population of the West Bank, excluding East

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**Phil Davison**  
Lima

The 20 or so guerrillas of the Tupac Amaru Revolution Movement (MRTA) freed a further seven hostages on new year's day, leaving them with 74 captives including the President's brother Pedro, cabinet ministers, senior police and military officers, congressmen, two am-

## Fujimori: Angry at rebels' propaganda coups

The seven walked out with one of Peru's leading Catholic churchmen. Bishop Juan Luis Cipriani of Ayacucho. Although he has said his visits to the building were pastoral, he appears to have won the release of many of the nearly 500 hostages freed over the past two weeks.

Despite the latest release, there was no sign of an early end to the 16-day-old occupation which began when the rebels stormed a diplomatic cocktail party. The MRTA yesterday issued a statement saying the ball was now in Mr Fujimori's court.

"We call on all the progressive men and women of the world to keep demanding that the Peruvian government come to a peaceful solution that will lead to the freedom of the political prisoners and the prisoners of war [the hostages] taken by our commando unit," said the statement, datelined "somewhere in the central jungle".

"Now it is the Peruvian government's turn to speak."

Mr Fujimori was said to have been particularly angered by an impromptu press conference given by MRTA leader, Nestor Cerna, inside the building on

A group of reporters had been allowed through police cordons to film the door of the residence when a Japanese photographer broke from the group and approached the building holding up a sign saying "Kyodo", the name of his Japanese news agency.

The other journalists followed and Cerpa, his face covered by a bandanna, held a news conference, haranguing Mr Fujimori's "dictatorship."

junior's dictatorship.



**The United States is set to announce steps to guard against any outbreak of BSE, or mad-cow disease, amongst its cattle herds.**

In the next few days, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to issue a ban on the

recycling of waste protein from cows, sheep and other ruminants into animal feed. Scientists believe that mad-cow disease was first allowed to spread when remains of sheep infected with scrapie, a disease closely related to BSE, was fed to cattle.

The US has so far escaped the disease which has led to the mass slaughter of Britain's herds. There has been a US ban on imports of British beef since 1985 and on live cattle imports from Britain since 1989.

**David Usborne – New York**

Libya yesterday executed six senior officers and two civilians convicted of spying using equipment supplied by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Libyan state-run radio reported.

state-run radio reported:  
 "Reporting the convictions  
 by Libya's Supreme Military  
 Court on Wednesday, the  
 state-controlled Libyan  
 television said: "The ag-  
 ents ... supplied agents of  
 foreign governments with  
 information relating to the  
 country's defence secrets, for  
 espionage purposes, by  
 exploiting their membership  
 of the Libyan army."

**AP/Reuters - Cairo**

No one likes to be alone on New Year's eve, or on New Year's day, and especially if they are stuck in an elevator

Hui Chow-fong, an elevator reader for Hongkong Electric Holdings Ltd, spent the holidays alone in a lift where he was trapped for more than 40 hours before being found yesterday. The 36-year-old got stuck on Tuesday afternoon in a lift of an office building. The building was then closed for the New Year break. **Reuters - Hong Kong**

Newt Gingrich will be able to retain his powerful position in the US Congress following a probe of his ethics, sources close to the investigation said.

The House ethics subcommittee recommended that Mr. Gingrich, a Republican, be given a reprimand, rather than the more serious punishment, censure, which would have cost him his job as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The decision means that Gingrich can stay at his post, one of the most influential legislative jobs in Washington.

The investigation focused on Gingrich's involvement with a tax-exempt organization which he set up to finance a college course. The course was videotaped and distributed as a recruiting aid. **AP—Washington**

Experts are monitoring a huge glacier in Italy's western Alps amid fears that a huge section could drop onto an inhabited valley, authorities said.

The Rome daily *La Repubblica*, citing unidentified experts, reported that a block of about 30,000 cubic metres of ice and snow may break free within a month from the Grandes Jorasses glacier on the Mount Blanc range. The collapse could threaten the village of Planginieux and threaten in the worst case.

### hotels in the Ferret valley.

A thief stole a sheep from a Christmas nativity crib in the western Belgian city of Ghent and slaughtered it on the spot, police said.

The thief left only the sheep's head, feet and entrails but did not touch the three other sheep and the plaster statues of Joseph, the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus. "Looks like someone who wanted a New Year's Eve meal," Ghent police said. *Reuters - Brussels*

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6 Voters have rejected Western-style democracy and freedoms in a watershed election. They would win big or lose big depending on whether or not they voted for us



Winner takes all: Victory wave from Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, whose PAP party defeated one of its most articulate critics, Chee Soon Juan (right)

Photographs: Reuters/AP

# Singapore's ruling party tightens its grip on power

Economic threats and electoral system ensure PAP wins island state's poll, writes Stephen Vines

Following the most savage election campaign in Singapore's history the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) has retained its stranglehold on political power by winning 81 of the 83 seats in parliament after yesterday's poll.

The opposition parties also lost ground in terms of the overall popular vote, gaining around a third of the total, compared with the 39 per cent they won in the 1991 election.

However, under Singapore's unique electoral system winning this proportion of the vote yielded only two parliamentary seats for opposition parties.

In the course of the nine-day campaign the opposition generated far more excitement than the ruling party by holding monster rallies around the island. Candidates also reported an unusually high level of public positive response when campaigning door to door.

The campaign was dominated by savage attacks on one of the leading opposition politicians, the 61-year-old lawyer Tang Liang Hong, who the PAP accused of being a "Chinese chauvinist". More significantly, however, the ruling party made it clear that those voting for the opposition would pay a high price for not supporting the government. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong threatened that his party would examine the election results precinct by precinct to identify where voters failed to support the PAP.

He said that the government would follow a "winner takes all" principle, meaning that those who supported the government would get better public services, while opposition areas would be left at the end of the queue. Mr Goh explained this as meaning that voters would "win big or lose big", depending on whether or not they voted for the ruling party.

Although the PAP fought the election as though it were fighting for its political life, it won the election before it began because the opposition contested only a minority of seats.

The ruling party made it clear that it saw no role for opposition members in parliament. "Opposition politicians are not what you call deep politicians," said Lee Kuan Yew, the grand old man of Singapore politics. "They are superficial ones."

The PAP repeatedly described this election as a "watershed".

Last night Mr Goh said he was satisfied with the result because the voters "have rejected Western-style democracy and freedoms".

The election reduced the opposition from four members to two. They will have a difficult job representing the country's entire opposition in the face of an increasingly aggressive ruling party, showing few signs of looking for compromises.

The PAP will be particularly pleased to have defeated Chee Soon Juan, one of its most articulate critics in parliament.

It also took the scalp of JB Jeyaretnam, Singapore's most

enduring opposition leader. However the biggest prize was the defeat of Tang Liang Hong. The PAP said it was justified in launching an onslaught on Mr Tang because he threatened to upset the delicate racial balance in the country, a charge he vigorously denied, saying that he had become the focus of the government's ire because he spoke for the mass of the people excluded from the political process.

Shortly before the poll Mr Goh said that his personal standing and that of his two deputies were at stake should Mr Tang win. In the event he has strengthened his position against some internal party criticism.

The PAP has won all eight elections held since independence in 1965. Its political dominance is heavily fortified by control of the media.

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## Chechen court applies Islamic law

Grozny (AP) — A recently established Islamic court in Chechnya has ordered a man to pay 63 camels to the relatives of a person he killed in a traffic accident.

Muslim separatists in effect control Chechnya after a 20-month war with Russian troops, and they have set up new courts based on their interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia.

In one of the first verdicts, three judges yesterday convicted Ali Khasiev of killing Yusup Akbulatov in a traffic accident and ordered him to pay 63 camels to Akbulatov's relatives.

There is only one problem: there are no camels in Chechnya. As an alternative, Khasiev was ordered to pay \$63,000 (£38,000) to Akbulatov's family. The judges later reduced it to 2m roubles (about £210) when the defendant said it would be impossible for anyone in the war-battered republic to raise \$63,000.

The judges based the original award on a formula that equates one camel to two bulls, which Chechnya does have. A bull is worth about \$500 in Chechnya.

Under some interpretations of Islamic law, people convicted of crimes are ordered to pay compensation to the family of the victim.

The Sharia judges had a two-month course in Islamic law by a Jordanian-born Chechen who spent eight years in Afghanistan. Sharia courts are presently operating alongside traditional Russian courts in Chechnya.

The presidential and parliamentary elections set for 27 January are virtually certain to bring to power Muslim separatists expected to favour Islamic traditions over Russian ones.

The local election commission yesterday registered 19 candidates for the presidential race. The candidates will be required to take an oath later this week, swearing their allegiance to the idea of an independent

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# The end of Empire will test our good faith

This year is already marked out as one of great significance for Britain, and not just because of the forthcoming election. In June Hong Kong, the last colony of any great strategic or economic importance, is to be handed back to China after more than 150 years under the Union flag.

It is a momentous step in the history of Hong Kong, once derided by Lord Palmerston as a barren little island, now one of the world's leading financial centres. But it is also a landmark for Britain. Once Hong Kong goes, there remains only a cluster of islands – once strategically important, now just dots in the oceans of the globe.

Empire was always regarded by its proponents as a mirror in which the British could see reflected their glory, their moral superiority and their strength. We have another chance to show what we are made of this year – because the transfer of Hong Kong, perhaps more than any other decolonisation, carries grave risks for the people of the colony.

There have been signs over the past few weeks that the Government is prepared to demonstrate some spine. It has loudly said that China's plans to impose a provisional legislature on Hong Kong go against the spirit and the letter of the Joint Declaration setting out the terms for the

transfer of sovereignty. Governor Chris Patten, in his interview with *The Independent* today, is at pains to point out that Hong Kong's democrats must play a role in the territory after the hand-over.

But as important as the detail – more so – is that Britain continues to focus on Hong Kong, keeping its eyes on the Chinese-appointed authorities and their Peking masters. The omens are not good here. The British have drifted out of empire, rarely focusing on the problems we have caused, rarely aware of the continued existence of those places where once we ruled.

A hundred years ago, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee with a vast display of imperial might in a country that ruled a quarter of the globe. Today, we are barely aware that it ever existed. Apart from the names of streets and pubs that commemorate imperial battles or heroes, an immigrant population that came from the colonies and found a cold welcome, and a taste for an oriental beverage which we defile with milk, there is not much on the surface to show that we were once an imperial nation.

Beneath the surface, however, there is a lot. Our economy is built on the networks stitched together by empire. Most of our great institutions – from the banks to the BBC –

bear its imprint. Our literature is full of it, from the historical to the present day. Our cuisine, in kitchens or high-street restaurants, is a testament to empire, as is our language, with its bungalows, its pyjamas and its running amok. The very creation of the idea of Britishness owes much to the imperial experience, as Linda Colley points out in her study, *Britons*.

Above all, there is our attitude to the rest of the world, a curious mixture of arrogance, indifference and post-imperial insecurity. All too

often, we still subconsciously see the world in terms that we have inherited from the 19th century.

Imperious still, despite our fall from grace, we rarely heed Kipling's hubristic warning: "Lest we forget – lest we forget!" We have forgotten; the achievements of empire, and the atrocities, all have been relegated to the history books, if there. All that remains is a kind of Merchant Ivory version, restaurants called "A Taste of the Raj", or Rhodes on the telly. We are a nation that has effaced our history and replaced it with a "Her-

itage" version – more palatable, less controversial, less colourful.

Later this year, we have a chance to make amends and to show that the links forged by culture, by trade and by history still mean something. Emergency help for Hong Kong dissidents and ethnic minorities must be considered as a last-minute possibility. But that should be only the start.

Britain is to host a Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Edinburgh in October, the first time such a meeting has been held here for 20 years. It is perhaps fitting that the Commonwealth will meet after the Conservatives are likely to have lost the election, ending nearly 20 years of Tory rule. For all their imperial baggage, first picked up by Disraeli in his Crystal Palace speech of 1872, the Conservatives have shown scant interest in the former colonies since the end of empire (beside the occasional rumble over the white colonial élites).

Aid to the Commonwealth nations has been cut, their interests have routinely been ignored, and Margaret Thatcher rarely thought it worth her while to listen to the views of her peers when they met. It is to be hoped that will change under a new government.

One of the first tasks that a new Foreign Secretary will be asked to

perform is to attend the Hong Kong hand-over. If things go wrong, then or in the aftermath of Chinese rule, it will be up to – perhaps – Robin Cook to make sure that Britain's voice is heard, and respected. The empire may have gone, but the post-imperial responsibilities are still there.

## The millennium? You just missed it

So we've missed it. According to Christian academics, Jesus must have been born in or before 4BC. The mix-up was, it turns out, perpetrated by a monk, Dionysius Exiguus, in 664. Thus the "real" new millennium began in 1996. The monk's lapse of concentration will cast a small cloud of doubt over the frantic money-raising for the coming millennium party. In fact, of course, we are really celebrating the survival of ourselves, the human race, without whose counting there would be no tally of years. At the same time, we should be looking at our behaviour and asking: but for how much longer? Here, at least, old Exiguus has done us a small favour: those who believed that 2,000 years of Christ in the world had some magical significance and meant The End have already been proved wrong.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Empathy the key to debate on abortion

Sir: At the heart of the debate on abortion is how to deal with an always tragic conflict of interests between the mother and the unborn child. Almost all can empathise with the plight of the mother, and hence the general consensus on her right to choose; however, many also empathise with the child, especially at the later stages of development.

From Polly Toynbee's comments (1 January), one can only deduce she is unwilling or unable to countenance the latter at any stage; viability, she declares, should not be considered in determining the time limit on abortion. And she even claims that the issues are so crystal clear that even pro-lifers are half-hearted in their protests.

So come on, Ms Toynbee, explain. What are these supposedly self-evident truths about the nature of the unborn child? Please spell out the universally agreed stages in development at which a foetus is granted no rights/some rights/full human rights. Do you believe there are any circumstances in which society should deny a woman the right to an abortion, even up to full term?

It is precisely this inability or refusal to empathise with others – particularly society's victims – which is seen in other contexts as a major cause of the disintegration of social cohesion and the rise in violence. And it is a lack of empathy which drives the US pro-life extremists – with whom Ms Toynbee claims to sympathise – to acts of violence, and which, thankfully, is absent in this country. MANUS HENRY Oxford

Sir: Those proposing that the criminal law is applied to abortion present evidence which does not accord with the memories of those who practised medicine prior to the present Act. Bouncing babies adopted by loving parents did exist; but all too common were infected and sometimes dying women who had obtained an abortion in the back streets.

It is an illusion to think that prohibiting abortion by law will mean no abortions; desperate women will seek help where they can. All terminations of pregnancy are to be regretted, but there should be a choice for those to be performed in decent and hygienic conditions. Dr PETER SAUNDY Llangynidr, Powys

Sir: In reply to Polly Toynbee's taunts, I for one would be very willing to barricade myself outside the Houses of Parliament if that would change the abortion laws. The fact that American-style aggression tactics are not present in England in no way betokens a lack of desperate feeling. The next few months may provide the most effective rejoinder to Ms Toynbee's gibes! The Rev CHRIS FINDLAY-WILSON Poole, Dorset

Sir: Your leading article of 30 December defends Tony Blair's voting for abortion on the grounds that he will not impose his morality on his neighbours. I look forward to hearing parliamentary candidates say that although they personally favour abortion, they will vote against it on the grounds that they cannot impose their morality on unborn children. BRENDAN GERARD London NW7



### Stroll into the new millennium

Sir: As I read – and sympathised with – the hopes of Lord Rogers for the Millennium Dome (interview, 23 December) I wondered if it would not be more daring, and more sensible, to spend millions, hundreds of millions, on transforming central London – even briefly – into a car-free zone.

World's Largest Pedestrian City? Millennium Festival: Biggest Street Fair Ever? What would a season of traffic-free London produce in terms of visitors, events, and defining London as the city of the future? What would £700m buy? A week? A month? Six months? And what if it included imaginative transformations of Trafalgar Square, Marylebone Road, the Mall, Oxford Street? Temporary constructions, happenings, performance spaces, gardens.

The Exhibition of 1851 was partly about things to come. It fired the imagination, drawing the curious from around the world. It was hugely successful, and transformed London.

What worked then doesn't work now. Faith in technology has eroded. Architectural monuments and grand landscapes are less and less likely to draw people. We look for improved quality of life in less tangible things: free time, open space, peace and quiet, a healthy environment and a sense of common purpose. A bold step in that direction would again bring people from around the world. It might mark the start of another era. DAVID PAPADOPOULOS London N4

### Knights do battle for the theatre

Sir: It is splendid that Alan Ayckbourn and Richard Eyre have both been knighted. The regional theatre in Britain has long honoured them both for their contribution to it and their redoubtable defence of it.

Sir Alan's battle in Scarborough ("Why Ayckbourn will fight on for his theatre", 31 December) is indeed representative of several last-ditch stands that will take place this spring as the effects of central government's standstill grant to the Arts Council and its annual cuts to local councils come through the pipeline.

For every one of the past five years regional theatres have warned that they are cutting the number of plays they produce, the number of actors they employ, the adventurousness of their programming and their valuable services in education and training. We are being forced to diminish the many roles we play, from helping to create more cohesive local communities through to underpinning the commercial theatre.

This latter role has been fully acknowledged by our most successful commercial producer, Sir Cameron Mackintosh. Now we have two more knights in the field. We'll need them more than ever in the dangerous weeks ahead when local councils and the Arts Council take their onerous decisions, while the Government turns a blind eye

to the damage it is doing to the health and wealth of the nation. PHILIP HEDLEY Artistic Director Theatre Royal Stratford East London E15

Sir: Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Michael Tippett, Sir William Walton, Lord Webber. Enough said. DAVID MOORE Ipswich

### Intrusion at the prison gate

Sir: The allegations by members of the probation service of intrusive body-searching ("Union acts over jail searches of visitors", 28 December) are alarming. I write as a former member of the probation service, of the Probation Inspectorate, and as one who currently has extensive contact with probation officers throughout the country.

Over the years, I have never encountered any reported incidents among members of the service that the Prison Department seems so keen to prevent. In the past two or three years I have been an occasional official visitor to a maximum-security prison in a neighbouring county. These visits have been made to probation staff and not to prisoners. Nevertheless, although I have not been searched in the intimate fashion so rightly complained of by probation officers, every item in one's possession has to be removed, and on one occasion my pen was unscrewed; on another a small nail-

file safely lodged in a comb case had to be left at the gate. Not even high-risk inmates such as El Al go to such lengths. At the prison in question a costly system of identity cards for visitors was introduced, only to be abandoned for technical reasons; this would not, however, have obviated the regular searching procedures.

I am fully in favour of rigorous measures to prevent escapes and the introduction of contraband items, if these are applied in a discriminating fashion and with an adequate understanding of risk-assessment. In view of current prison overcrowding the Prison Department can ill afford to alienate professionals like probation officers who can often help to defuse tensions. Professor H PRINS Midlands Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice Loughborough University Leicestershire

### Happy dogs in quarantine

Sir: It seems clear that the discussion on rabies and quarantine rules ("Quarantine laws on the dog house", 13 December) is to be clouded by an anthropomorphic argument as follows: "I would hate to face six months solitary confinement; therefore my dog suffers as I would."

This is not necessarily true. Can a dog appreciate time – especially a future duration of six months? I was for some time in veterinary

charge of quarantine kennels, and observed the behaviour of many dogs. They settled down at once to regular meals (maybe better balanced than at home), regular exercise and what we would call "boredom". Of course, when their owners visited, they exhibited transports of excitement and joy; yet as soon as the visitors were out of sight, sound and smell, the dog would settle down to "do its time" at once. I saw no evidence of pining.

Since those days I have had to deal with a good few cases of rabies and suspected rabies when in the tropics, and I continue to support our quarantine regulations for the sake of animals which could be exposed to this terrible death, wild life put at the same risk, and of owners and others having to deal with rabid dogs. BRENDAN HALPIN MRCVS Chertbury, Oxfordshire

### Rape trauma

Sir: Remarks attributed to Professor Joan Freeman ("Years of trauma for rape victims", 30 December) are factually incorrect. Long-term psychological disorder is not an inevitable consequence of rape. Not all rape victims feel guilty. Children are not necessarily more resilient than adults. Treatment does not have to be given daily for a year.

These comments can only further depress women who are coping with the consequences of sexual assault, and dissuade them from seeking the effective and relatively brief treatments which are available. Dr JAMES THOMPSON Director, Traumatic Stress Clinic London W7

### Stupid machine is no threat

Sir: Andrew Wyatt's letter (31 December) caused much mirth at our breakfast table. Only last week, we took delivery of a new word-processor and found ourselves muttering a number of words not to be found in its vocabulary. This machine of infinite self-satisfaction speaks no tongue but its own, and can never answer questions like "Why are you asking me to close documents I am not aware of having opened?"

Machines may have brains, if these really are only a "mass of electrochemical switches", but they are totally and boringly lacking in personality. If we had had a human teacher to explain our new machine to us last week, instead of a set of inflexible mechanical responses, we should not have missed the last post on Christmas Eve. I never cease to wonder at the naivety of scientists who keep on hoping that one day their dolls will turn out to be alive. DORIANE POTTS Oxford

Sir: Andrew Wyatt, envisaging a world taken over by artificial intelligence, seems to be content with the idea that some time in the near future the human race will be treated in the same way as it currently treats chimpanzees. I do not look forward to a day when people are kept in small cages with no room to exercise and may be used for vivisection. A Brave New Future? I don't think so. S WROE Birmingham

Sir: Andrew Wyatt, in his image of our future on some earthlike nature reserve, mentions that we would be protected and safe. Us? Get a grip. It is the rest of the universe that would be protected and safe. JOHN ATHANASIOU London N9

### Slow train

Sir: Roger Cowell (letter, 31 December) complains with reason about the train service from Oxford. A service such as he experienced sends a message to its customers: "We are unreliable and do not care about you. Please do not use our trains."

However, the Oxford train service was notoriously poor even before privatisation; hence the successful coach services which now compete with the trains between Oxford and London. By contrast, South West Trains' services from Hampshire to London were good before privatisation, and remain so (same trains, mostly the same staff). Privatisation seems to have had little effect on service quality either way, so far. JOHN STANNING Winchester

### Omen for Major?

Sir: As we enter a general election year, it may be of interest to recall what Salisbury said to Balfour about a failing Israeli administration.

As head of a Cabinet his fault was want of firmness. The chiefs of Departments got their own way too much. The Cabinet as a whole got it too little, and this necessarily followed from having at the head of affairs a statesman whose only final political principle was that the Party must on no account be broken up, and who shrank therefore from exercising coercion on any of his subordinates. PHILIP GOLDENBERG Woking, Surrey

Post letters to *Letters to the Editor*, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk.

E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



## essay



# Rich men behaving badly

Stranger than fiction: squabbling luminaries of the anti-European parties, headed by a wild-eyed Sir James Goldsmith, remind Christopher Harvie of some outlandish characters from literature

Seventeen years ago, when Scottish devotion went down the Suwannee and Margaret Thatcher steamed in to power, I made my excuses and left. I had been offered the newly created chair in British studies at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

One of the other contenders was Dr Alan Sked of the London School of Economics. Like some university character in Anthony Powell's *Dance to the Music of Time*, encountered subsequently in a new and implausible guise, Dr Sked (another Scot, but let that pass) is these days the supremo of the United Kingdom Independence Party, sworn foe of the federal Europe that he seemingly wasn't too worried about in 1979. Sked's outfit is a Reliant Robin in the national salvation stakes, but has scored first blood in a contest that looks like outdoing Tory-Labour or even Tory-Tory for all-out venom.

One John Bostock, North-west regional organiser of Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, has fled to Sked, claiming that Goldsmith's is a Potemkin party, "an empty shell... run by amateurs". As a former Conservative agent, he should know what he is talking about, but I don't intend to intrude on the private grief of Anglo-Britain. The alluring thing about the clash of patriots is its entertainment value.

Watching Goldsmith and his Referendum Party - recycled Thatcherite headbangers and golden-thighed blondes out of *Hell* cavorting before the Victor Meldrew fan club of Godalming - is certainly more fun than John and Tony intoning Christian morality. But have we been here before?

Those staring china-blue eyes, Fleming's Goldfinger had 'em. But he was dwarfish, red-haired and wore plus fours. Staring out of Goldsmith's sun-wrinkled skull, they reminded me more of Jeremy Bentham's head, in that haughty University College London. Bang on for fanaticism, but very dead.

Or Buchanan's Dominic Medina in *The Three Hostages*? Hemispherical skull right, eyes right, Tory party background right. But Medina was Irish, not much taken with the Great British public: a proto-Eurocrat, for sure.

Go back a bit. Disraeli's Sidonia, out of *Coningsby*? Jewish, cosmopolitan, been there, seen that, knew them, and could buy the lot, given time and inclination. Disraeli himself managed to put the Tory party out of the political running for nearly 30 years, after he went for Peel's jocular over Free Trade in 1846. Hmm.

Think of the Goldsmith entourage, and remember a scabrous but entertaining series of novels by Simon Raven: *Abns for Oblivion*, *Friends in Low Places*, *The Rich Play Late*, *Places Where They Sing*, *Bring Forth the Body*. This was a public-school world inhabited almost exclusively by Flashmans, in which various louche customers - military men, gamblers, journalists, academics and straightforward shits of hell - sallied out of toxic versions of the Drones Club and the *Spectator*.

For a decade they wheeled and dealt entertainingly in Macmillan's and Wilson's England, combating "the malice of time, chance and the rest of the human race". And despite this,

they had all managed to re-appear in the penumbra of the Referendum Party, albeit older and baldier: the Carton Weirs, Max de Frevilles, Lords Canteloupe. Admittedly the orangutan tendency of John Aspinall seemed beyond even Raven's powers of imagination, but the ineffable Lord Rees-Mogg, intoning in *The Times*, had figured as the hyper-devous Somerset Lloyd-James in Raven and Edward Fox was quite capable of playing the lot.

But other things have changed. Multi-national speculators, Merdies, Lopezos and Melmottes, used to come to grief under the symbolic wheels of British trains. Nowadays they tend to own them. In *Aims for Oblivion* days, Goldsmith was - when not gambling at the Claremont and partying at Annabells - harmlessly occupied in the grocery business, boggling kitchen rolls to Scottish wives in Templeton's and Coopers. After his Wilson knighthood, like many an 'Eighties' superstar, he went global and invented something called "polyculturalism". This meant the freedom to make deals in several languages from several tax havens.

Goldsmith is now before us as Anglo-British patriot. The recent sequence of adverts, urging the voters to choose between a federal Europe and some so-far-unrealised association of national states, cost

about £225,000, or half the entire election budget of the Scottish National Party. If you allocate Goldsmith's total £21m largesse seat-by-seat, he will be putting up £2.3m in Scotland alone.

Since the effect of rallies, money, more than 600 candidates and bags of publicity from the right-wing press, has not even been a hairline blip in the opinion polls, the Referendums begin to look more like the Maharishi's Levitators than, say, Sir Oswald Mosley's New Party in 1931. And Mosley, as an ex-Labour minister, had more credibility.

Although the Referendum ideology may be comforted - good of Diceyan parliamentary sovereignty plus people's rights against Parliament - their appeal to Tory activists who now find themselves forlorn, exiled from local affairs, menaced by big capitalism, is real enough. This is going to be an election where a couple of percentage points off the Tory vote could make the difference between manageable defeat and catastrophe on the scale of 1846 or 1906 - with intriguing consequences for the grander sort of speculation.

It is this "going for broke" element - volcanic cash movements with millions punted on the outcome - which conjures up Raven's world: de Freville, Lykiadopoulos, Lloyd James, doing rather well against time,

chance, etc. Not least Sir James himself, unloading his grocery shares before Black Friday, when immature yuppies went from bang to crash.

Annabel's and the Claremont are now up and running on a world scale: dedicated to the preservation of the ethic that turns currency fluctuations into huge gains for the very rich. Since speculation accounts for about 90 per cent of the business of the City of London, with boring old industrial finance clocking up a mere 10 per cent, the Referendum boys will have a lot of well-heeled allies in stripy shirts, who don't like the idea of a stable euro one bit.

What Raven cottoned on to, and more solemn cultural critics such as Correlli Barnett and Martin Wiener did not, has been how well aristocratic values of a sort have actually coped with Bagehot's "rough and vulgar world of English commerce". The green baize tables at Whites and Crookfords have always been closer to the City than to the widget-makers.

Since the mid-Seventies, London fleshpots have thrived on the immigration of great, if less-than-progressive, wealth from the Middle East and more recently from East Europe. While Thatcher wittered on about providing "know-how" to the ex-Soviets to enable them to become Grantham councillors and pillars of the Wesleyan Chapel, Russia's new neo-feudalists exported about 15 times more cash westwards for booze, cars, jewellery, girls and property.

This commonwealth of high-rollers is the up-to-date version of what the US President Teddy

Roosevelt called at the beginning of the century "the male-factors of great wealth". Roosevelt developed federal government to work in favour of the citizen by keeping the Fisks, Morgans and Rockefellerers in line, and it is this "strong" version of federalism that Goldsmith and his ilk view with all the enthusiasm that Dracula had for garlic. Brussels is more of a babel than it ought to be, but the way its conventions are being built up resembles, as Judge David Edward of the European Court-at-Luxembourg has told us, the American federal ideal admired by Roosevelt's friend, the Scots constitutionalist and internationalist James Bryce. Once a properly federal authority gets them in its sights, the "polycultural" rich have every reason to be scared.

In the 18th century, Adam Smith and David Hume argued that a small state like their own Scotland couldn't restrain the "luxury and corruption" that went with capitalism: hence the importance to them of the Union and the London parliament. But luxury and corruption were as much the breath of life to Raven's gang as duping local Tory worthies with flannel about moral revival. Is it a coincidence that Goldsmith and company (and behind them a none-too-discreet Rupert Murdoch) arrive like the US cavalry when Westminster, far from tackling ballooning global speculation, accommodates it?

Hypocrisy was the stock-in-trade of Raven's Turbotts and Cantaloupes. Overdone at the time, this bunch would quickly grasp how ill constitutional patriotism sits with a public estimate which has gone, over two decades, from enthusiasm to near-disgust. Sleaze, still exotic in *Aims for Oblivion*, now looks like the lubricant that runs the place.

In an epoch where one part-time novelist, Douglas Hurd, could put his salary up by a factor of four when he shifted from the Foreign Office to a bank, Westminster itself looks like a South-east England microstate - the Senate of Nimbya - performing Monaco or Liechtenstein services for the stinking rich.

There is a lot of ruin in a nation, but a point comes when sheer delirium sets in. Anglo-British, of which the Referendum Party is the pathological version, seems to have got there. Twenty-odd years ago, before Anthony Trollope became the comfort blanket of the English élite, Raven made a second reputation adapting him for television, scoring a particular hit with *The Way We Live Now*.

This sour tale was of England teeming with speculators, mercenary yuppies and aristos on the take, the House of Commons as its head. It was chosen by John Major as his gift to the newly elected Bill Clinton. Was he trying to tell him something? "I like a rough game," says Raven's Lord Cantaloupe after some particularly dirty deal has kept nemesis at bay, "and even a foul one, but I won't risk having the entire stadium blown up." Polyculturalists don't have to worry about that.

Professor Harvie is the author of *The Centre of Things: British Political Fiction from Disraeli to the Present*, Routledge, £11.95. He is currently writing an introduction for the Everyman edition of Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister*.

Advertisement

## Seven out of ten in the UK die without a Will

Few people expect to pass away in the near future - most of us have every expectation of going on for years. Perhaps this is the reason seven out of ten people in this country die without ever making a Will.

There are other reasons of course. Will making is often thought to be time-consuming and complicated - this is not always the case. Sometimes there are issues which are difficult to discuss with family members.

Others assume that, even without a Will, when they die, their wife or husband will automatically inherit all their money and possessions.

Not true.

Making a Will - and keeping it up to date - is essential to safeguard your loved ones.

If you are married, your property may not necessarily pass in its entirety to your husband or wife, unless you make a Will leaving him or her everything.

If you are unmarried, none of your property will pass to your surviving partner unless you make a Will. If you die without leaving a Will, the law provides that certain relatives, including brothers, sisters, parents, cousins, aunts and uncles might be entitled to your estate. It leaves a horrible mess - at a time when the people you leave behind, and hoped to be able to support, are least able to cope.

When you marry, any Will you made previously may become null and void. If you divorce, any provision made for your previous spouse is cancelled. The birth of a child or a death in the family could mean you should amend an existing Will. A significant increase or reduction in the value of your personal assets could require an amendment to any existing Will. If you die without leaving a Will and you have no relatives, your entire estate will go to the government.

Making a Will - and keeping it up to date - is absolutely vital if you want to ensure that the needs of

your loved ones are catered for in the event of your death.

Have you made a Will? Is your Will up to date?

WWF have published a free guide to Will making which outlines, clearly, the issues you need to bear in mind when preparing a Will and explains some of the more confusing jargon associated with Wills and bequests.

It also describes how you can go about making a bequest to charity - in particular WWF-UK. Remember, having an out-of-date Will is little better than having no Will at all. This free booklet is essential reading if you care about your family and friends - it's also important for your own peace of mind.

So, send for your free guide today, which you can request by calling 01483 426445 or writing to Sally Burrows, Legacies Officer, WWF-UK, FREEPOST, Panda House, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1BR.

Please also remember to quote reference IN23.

## Bollie all round: last year's fabbest women

Yesterday I brought you the top boys' names of 1996 as calculated from their popularity in media headlines, with Mister (as in "Mister Darcy") and "Mister Willoughby" being the winner, closely pursued by other unusual boys' names such as Wallace and Gromit, which goes to show that new names can still make their mark even today.

Incidentally, I have had several protests saying that the whole thing must be fixed, as the name John (as in John Major) was not even mentioned. What these protesters do not realise is that the PM is never referred to as John in headlines: he is always referred to by his surname, as footballers and cricketers are. You may be able to fiddle things on *Today* but not in this column!

And so to the girls' names of 1996. No sign this year of last year's winner, Pamela Anderson, nor of other hot names such as Divine and Janet. One can hardly remember now why the name Divine was so fashionable - indeed, I find it hard to dig

up any reference to Janet Street-Porter, responsible alone for the popularity of the name Janet in 1995. Where is she now? What is she doing? No answers on a postcard, please.

Some interesting new girls' names this year, including Mandy. What is interesting about this is that although it is a girl's name, it is borne most famously by a man, Peter Mandelson. We have also seen a revival of Jennifer, partly because of the TV programme *Two Fat Ladies* and partly because of Jennifer Saunders, author of the now departed *Absolutely Fabulous*. One very interesting thing about *Absolutely Fabulous*, by the way, is that if you imagined Edina and Patsy going on into later life, you can't help thinking that they might end up very like Chrissa and Jennifer in *Two Fat Ladies*. Was this in fact intended to be a sitcom and are they fictional characters? Just a thought.

Incidentally, it is food for thought that the names of the two characters in *Absolutely Fabulous* - Edina and Patsy - came higher up



Miles Kingston

the list than the names of the actresses playing them. But without further ado, on to the top 10 newspaper girls' names in 1996. (Last year's positions in brackets.)

1. Emma ..... (8)
2. Fergie 'n' Di ..... (-)
3. Cruella ..... (-)
4. Aung ..... (-)
5. Pocahontas ..... (9)
6. Pandora ..... (-)
7. Ruby ..... (-)
8. Norma ..... (-)
9. Cherie ..... (-)
10. Benazir ..... (-)

Emma is a well-deserved winner, not only because it was the top Jane Austen name of the year, but because it featured in several other successful romantic episodes. Who can forget the period costume drama in which Emma Nicholson was wooed and won by the Liberal Democrats? Or in which Emma Thompson was wooed and won by Mr Willoughby?

I was personally glad to see Aung so popular, as this unusual Burmese name is attached to the deserving Burmese heroine Aung San Suu Kyi, who has suffered so much at the hands of the thugs who run Burma that she has had a Nobel Peace Prize conferred on her, though she only got third place in the *Today* programme's Personality of the Year contest, behind John Major, who has never shown such an appetite for democracy as Aung San Suu Kyi. Something wrong here, perhaps you are thinking? Cynics might say that it was unlikely for *Today* listeners to have voted for anyone

with personality at all.

What is unusual in this list is that at least three names belong to fictional characters (Emma, Pocahontas and Cruella) and there is some doubt about the existence in real life of anyone called Ruby Wax. Pandora is an unusual name, belonging to the wife of one of the Maxwell brothers and, as the judge in his trial said, it takes a woman of saintly suffering to be married to one of the Maxwell brothers. Other names that bobbed around without quite making the Top 10 were Ffynna, which is the sort of name borne by people who think it is interesting to walk round the world, and Bienvenida, which is the sort of name borne by people... but I had better be careful. No one wants a libel suit so early in the new year. And my predictions for 1997? Well, I fancy a rise in the ratings for Norma 'n' Cherie. Perhaps a sitcom for them together, like Chrissa and Jennifer or Edie and Patsy? Stranger things have happened.







## market report / shares

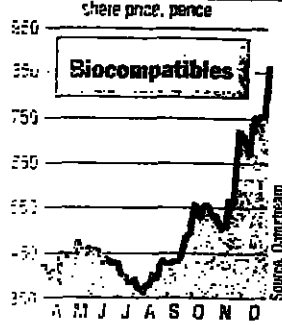
## Hangover on Wall Street gives investors the jitters

Taking Stock

## Data Bank

FTSE 100  
4057.4 - 61.1  
FTSE 250  
4469.4 - 21.0  
FTSE 350  
2017.9 - 25.9  
SEAQ VOLUME  
459.2m shares,  
27,865 bargains  
3% Index  
93.86 - 0.68

## Share spotlight



What a dismal start to the year. After the first of upstart Footsie forecasts the stock market was hit by an acute attack of the jitters on its first day of 1997 with Footsie crashing 61.1 points to 4,057.4p.

New York, demonstrating its power as the world's biggest market, did the damage. On New Year's Eve it crashed 101.1 points and remained in a ragged retreat while London was open yesterday.

After a merry festive run, achieved on low trading turnover, it could be argued the market was ripe for a correction and a little old-fashioned profit-taking.

Even so the brave souls forecasting a rip-roaring year have had an uncomfortable time as what was only a relatively modest weakness on Wall Street drew attention to London's fragility.

Many believe the first few months set the pattern for the

rest of the year. Although such a philosophy is often too simplistic the importance of sentiment is frequently overlooked by forecasters and there is little doubt that 1997's opening, if modest, hiccup has at least touched the foundation on which many an optimistic forecast was built.

Over the holiday season such brutal fundamentals as higher interest rates, sterling's strength and the uncertainty of the general election were largely ignored. The market seemed content to dwell on the deluge of new year share tips and allow a little window-dressing by fund managers to influence its direction.

Only six Footsie stocks managed to make progress. Best of the bunch the pedestrian National Grid which managed a 2p gain to 197.5p. The appearance of such a dull stock in pole position seemed to sum up the lacklustre state of



## MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

the market. Biocompatibles International was the undisputed leader of the FTSE 250 index. The healthcare group, which has moved ahead strongly over the holiday season, bounced another 45p to 865p. ML Laboratories, which has experienced a ragged run since hitting 468.5p in February, managed to stir itself into a 7p gain to 210.5p.

In the bleak conditions some of the third-liners enjoyed intriguing runs. Lanica Trust, the Andrew Regan vehicle, started 1997 as it had finished last year - in rampant form. The shares surged 212.5p to 1,875p, yet another peak.

The company's spectacular

progress has been achieved against a background of little information. It has done a mail order deal with the NAAFI and is set, so the rumour mill proclaims, to link with Littlewoods on the mail order front. In the meantime it is looking increasingly hard to justify a surge from 58p since Mr Regan, who had limited success with his earlier involvement, Hobsons, arrived in the autumn.

Shoprite, once a discount food retailer, was another attracting attention. The shares improved 3.35p to 34p. The market has for long suspected the group, shattered by the distressed sale of its once high-fly-

ing food chain, was preparing for a comeback.

It has indulged in a buy-back of preference shares and last month returned to the black with a half-year profit of £958,000. The group still has car dealerships and retail and property interest on the Isle of Man. With gearing down to 48 per cent it could, some suspect, be preparing the ground for an ambitious strike.

Capital Shopping shaded 2p to 364p. There is persistent market speculation it plans to swoop on Imry, the property arm of Barclays, the banking group. The company raised £205m through a rights issue in November and the market suspects the cash call was to provide ammunition for the Imry deal.

Barclays would also most certainly require a large cash element in any Imry sale and Capital should be in a position to provide sufficient cash to

promote the take over. The year's first newcomer, Sanctuary Music, fell victim to the low key atmosphere, managing a downbeat 65.5p from its 65p placing.

SDX, a business communications group, however, struggled off the new year gloom gaining 13p to 188.5p. It was floated last month at 160p.

Northern Leisure, a discotheque group, topped 200p before settling at 199.5p, up 7.5p. The shares have been strong following a Collins Stewart suggestion the shares could double in the next three years.

The stockbroker said profits this year could hit £8m (£5.5m) and then move to £10.9m.

It suggests Northern is getting to the size "whereby it represents an attractive acquisition target for a larger leisure company".

Premiere, running employment agencies, is set to double profits, believes researcher Hardman & Co. It expects last year's profits to come out at £783,000 and then move to nearly £1.5m in 1998. Since coming to market at 133p in the summer Premiere has made one significant acquisition. At 137.5p Hardman suggests the shares are on the lowest prospective rating of any quoted recruitment group.

Newarthill, the Oxford Group which owns building contractor Sir Robert McAlpine, plans to spend £6m buying in 11.6 per cent of its capital at 400p a share, and then bid 400p for the remaining capital. The buy-in involves the McAlpine family and an unidentified dealer. The bid for other shares is expected in March. The shares jumped 155p to 400p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights x Ex-dividend x Ex at a United Securities Market x Suspended x Partly Paid up x Non-Resident Shares. x AM Stock Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 223 223, and when prompted to do so enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 223 223 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 223 223.

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
BT	140000	ASDA Group	50000	BPI	40000	British Steel	30000
Virgin	60000	Lease Plan	40000	Water Shares	30000	Electricity Shares	30000
National Grid	50000	RAF	30000	High Street	20000	Water Shares	20000
West Bank	50000	BP	40000	Water Shares	20000	Water Shares	20000
WPP	50000	Labrador	40000	Water Shares	20000	Water Shares	20000

## FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open	40753 down 356	11.00	40829 down 256	14.00	40833 down 282
09.00	40721 down 464	12.00	40866 down 269	15.00	40830 down 276
10.00	40780 down 405	13.00	40803 down 289	Close	40574 down 611

## High/Low Stock

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

## Telecommunications

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Textiles &amp; Apparel

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Retailers, Food

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Retailers, General

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Pharmaceuticals

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Printing &amp; Paper

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Property

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Life Assurance

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Media

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Government Securities

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Index-linked

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Shorts

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Mediums

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Longs

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Support Services

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Water

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Transport

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Tobacco

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Aerospace

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Chemicals

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Engineering

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

## Electronics

Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price	Stock	Price
BT	100	BT	100	BT	100	BT	100

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High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

High	Low	Stock	Price	High	Low	Stock	Price
100	100	BT	100	100	100	BT	100

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STOCK MARKETS

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# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-238 2636 fax 0171-293 2095  
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## US output figures unnerve markets

Diane Coyle  
and Tom Stevenson

The stock market woke up with a thumping hangover yesterday as unexpectedly strong economic data from the US brought the FTSE100's festive run to an abrupt close. The index of leading shares finished the first trading session of 1997 61.1 points lower than New Year's Eve's all-time high as early afternoon gyrations on Wall Street sent dealers scurrying for cover in very thin trading.

America's manufacturing industry boomed in December, according to the first economic figures of 1997. The National Association of Purchasing Managers' index of activity jumped compared with the previous month. More worryingly, the prices index, one of the figures closely scrutinised by Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, increased.

"There is a sense that inflation is building in the pipeline,"

said Christopher Low, an analyst at HSBC Markets in New York. "The financial markets will begin speculating about a policy tightening, and interest rates will have to rise in deference," he added.

The activity index rose to 54 from 52.7 in November. Its prices component surged from 45.9 to 51.5, above the watershed between falling and rising prices and the highest level since mid-1995.

Even before the New York market opened, London had already struggled to maintain the poise of the holiday season, with dealers casting one eye back to Wall Street's 100 point fall on New Year's Eve and one forward to the expected US economic data. After clawing back

an early 40 point fall, the purchasing managers' index knocked it afresh and the market had closed before the US market itself regained its composure.

"UK shares are more sensitive to U.S. rates than to UK rates," said Robert Buckland, equity strategist at HSBC James Capel. "I think we'll have a bumpy ride in the first quarter, but more because of U.S. rates than because of any political noise the UK elections will provide."

Most traders remained sanguine about prospects for the London market, however, Mar-

tin Lupton, head of trading at Kleinwort Benson said. "This might slow investment in UK shares through next week, but the fundamentals remain good here and this market will gather steam. There's a lot of value in this market."

Hardest hit by the sell-off were companies that depend on the US economy for a large proportion of their sales such as Glaxo Wellcome, SmithKline Beecham and BTR. The persistent strength of the pound compounded exporters' problems and BP and Shell, big dollar earners, led the FTSE100 index lower.

Although few Wall Street analysts expect the Fed to raise its key interest rate as early as the next policy meeting at the beginning of February, many think the move will come before too many months pass. The prospect of an increase in interest rates drew closer in the UK too.

The recovery in British manufacturing faltered last month because of the strong pound. But the UK Purchasing Managers' survey suggested that industry will soon resume its strong upward trend.

A separate survey of the construction industry published

yesterday pointed to better prospects this year than any time since the late 1980s.

Manufacturing activity expanded in December but at the slowest pace since August, the monthly survey of purchasing managers reported. A reduction in stocks to meet year-end inventory targets reduced output growth.

City economists thought the news would allow Kenneth Clarke to stave off the next rise in the cost of borrowing until February. "Interest rates should be left on hold until the extent of the recovery is clearer," said Simon Briscoe at investment bank Nikko.

However, the survey did not point to alarming weakness in industry. "If I were the Chancellor, I'd use this in evidence. But the slowdown is no more

than you would expect in a three-week month, and I would be very surprised if the upward trend did not resume," said Peter Thomson, director general of the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply which compiles the report.

The headline index fell to 52.5, down from 54.2 but safely above the "boom and bust" dividing line of 50. Growth in new orders declined slightly but remained robust. Although the stronger pound had some impact on manufacturers of consumer goods, overseas demand for capital goods remained strong.

The real slowdown came in output and stocks. Stocks of both purchases and finished goods declined sharply. The CIPS said this reflected deliberate destocking to meet end of year targets. On the other hand, employment rose for the fifth month running and the prices manufacturers paid for imported materials declined.

## Pension funds beat big markets

Magnus Grimond

The average UK pension fund beat the rise in nearly all the big world stock markets last year - but only just. Most would have been better keeping their clients' money at home.

The inflation-beating 11.3 per cent rise in pension fund assets was still far short of the 16.6 per cent return from the FT All Share index of UK equities. This despite a rare year when fund managers outperformed the domestic index with their UK equity portfolios, recording an average 17 per cent growth.

George Urquhart of the WM Company, the pension fund performance measurement group which produced the figures, said the last time pension funds outperformed was in 1991. "Taken over the last 10 years, the average UK pension fund underperformed the index by 0.5 per cent per annum. But the bulk of that is dealing expenses."

Even so, his colleague, WM director Peter Warrington, remained determinedly optimistic.

"Historically active managers have, on occasion, underperformed the index. But in 1996 they have reaped handsome dividends by avoiding the poorer performing stocks in the FTSE 100 index," he said. Reflecting their more limited exposure to property and more active management, smaller funds outdid their larger brethren by 0.5 per cent.

Mr Warrington highlighted the real 9 per cent average return over last year's inflation figure of around 2 per cent as good news for pensioners and companies. It easily beat the 2 to 3 per cent real growth regarded as a good long-term return by actuaries, he said, and meant many companies could continue with pension contribution holidays.

However, institutions are turning more bearish. WM said many have taken profits in the rising markets and kept the money in cash, which has risen from 4.5 per cent to 5.8 per cent of average portfolios. Mr Warrington said this supported the widespread belief that major markets, particularly the US and UK, are overvalued.

The WM survey covered groups accounting for around three-quarters of UK pension fund assets, some 1,400 funds with total assets of £400m. Collectively, the industry is estimated to represent a little under a third of the whole UK stock market, just behind the life insurance companies with somewhat over a third.

The figure for UK equities compares with a 23.8 per cent return in 1995 and an 18.9 per cent average return over the past 20 years.

Investment in the domestic market has remained largely static at 53.8 per cent of portfolios during the past year.

## Ford warns over UK sales slide

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

Ford has issued dire warnings about the future of the company in the UK amid sliding market share and a threat to the Halewood plant on Merseyside, according to internal minutes.

At a meeting with union leaders last month senior management revealed the depths of their concern about the profitability of Ford of Britain which has incurred a loss of £2.9bn over the last seven years.

Bob Hill, personnel director, confirmed that market share had dropped below 20 per cent for the first time from a high of 26 per cent in the 1980s.

"While the market for cars and light vehicles has improved during the last year, Ford has been steadily losing share," he told them.

"The situation was the same for the European operation, but Mr Hill was at pains to emphasise that it was the UK that was faring 'worst of all'."

Speaking to representatives of white collar staff, Mr Hill singled out the Escort as the source of most anxiety. Market share of the car - which is made at Halewood, Saarlouis and Cologne - had plummeted from 10.8 to 6 per cent.

The vehicle's lacklustre performance in the market place was putting a "heavy strain" on Ford Europe, which is thought to be heading for a £1bn loss this year, and was a big contributor to the deficit in Britain.

Ford wants to manufacture its replacement, codenamed the

CW170, at one of the plants only. According to the minutes Mr Hill pointed to the cost involved in "dual and triple sourcing of models across Europe."

Mr Hill was said to be "not optimistic" about the future of the company but said that he would be fighting "as hard as anyone" to ensure that the CW170 was built at Halewood. A decision on the new Escort would be made late in January or early February, the minutes reveal.

Ford's personnel director gave a number of reasons for Ford's poor performance. There were "too many suppliers chasing too few customers" and there was "global overcapacity" of nearly 20 million vehicles and rising.

The company's fixed costs were also higher than their competitors, particularly in product design. "Flattening of prices in the market have all but removed any profitability from cars and light vehicles," he said.

At the meeting, union leaders reminded Mr Hill that despite his pessimistic prognosis, they would not tolerate any compulsory redundancies.

Tony Woodley, national officer of the Transport and General Workers' Union, which represents most of the manual workers at Ford, thought it unlikely that management would take the manufacture of the Escort away from Halewood.

He commented: "It would be politically and industrially unacceptable if they manufactured the Escort replacement elsewhere."



Donington Park race circuit fetches £40m. Two Four Sports has beaten the recently-floated Brands Hatch Leisure to acquire a 25-year lease over the Donington Park motor racing circuit and exhibition centre in a £40m deal. Two Four, which has run Donington Park since 1986, acquired the lease from Tom Wheatcroft, the property developer who reinstated racing at the then derelict track near Derby after buying it in 1971. The company, part-owned by Robert Fearnall, one of Mr Wheatcroft's former associates, will spend £3m upgrading the circuit.

## 'Telegraph' pensions frozen as profits fall

Matthew Horsman  
Media Editor

The Telegraph Group, publishers of the *Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*, has determined that it cannot meet increases to pensions payable to retired employees, following disappointing profits in 1996.

In past years, the group has made what it terms "ex-gratia" payments to pensioners under

a plan set up before Conrad Black, the Canadian media baron, bought a stake in the titles in 1986. The payments had been aimed at keeping pension cheques in line with inflation.

The original pension plan had been non-contributable for employees, and subsequent payments topped up by the company were seen as a moral rather than a legal requirement.

In a letter addressed to pen-

sioners, and sent just two days before Christmas, Jeremy Deedes, the managing director, wrote: "The company has had a reasonable but not particularly good year. Indeed, its trading profit has fallen short of the 1996 budget because of the intensive competition."

The letter was seen by pensioners last night as a concession from the *Telegraph* that competition from the *Times*,

Rupert Murdoch's flagship quality daily, had taken its toll. Mr Murdoch's News International has continued a selective price war in the quality market, particularly through a cut-rate price for Monday editions and a lower-than-average cover price for the rest of the week.

Mr Deedes also told pensioners that an ex-gratia payment for 1996 would have had "an adverse impact on the share

price of the parent company on overseas stock exchanges, and was judged an unfair taxation of those shareholders who have already paid the heavy cost of privatising the *Telegraph*."

The letter was seen by insiders as a reference to the buyout of minority shareholders last year by Mr Black. Mr Deedes told pensioners that the company would look again at the matter of pension increases in 1997.

## Guardian spikes plan to float non-core holdings

Matthew Horsman  
Media Editor

The Guardian Media Group has ruled out the flotation of its non-core holdings, despite strong support for the plan from some members of the board.

The decision, reached in recent weeks, ends several months of discussion over a plan to sell a stake in the company's *Auto Trader* title and other publications to the public. The float proceeds would have been used to support the core newspaper

titles, the *Guardian* and the loss-making *Observer*.

"The view was taken that the non-core assets were cash cows, and that they would be very useful to the group," a senior Guardian source said last night.

The prospect of a flotation, first revealed in *The Independent* in October, had been viewed by some board members as the best way to meet the rising costs of the *Observer*.

Meanwhile, the Canary Wharf bomb took its toll on interim results at the company, which set aside a whopping

£14.4m to cover the costs of shifting its printing from the damaged South Quay site to West Ferry Printers. The amount is believed to cover the costs of redundancies at the former printing site, as well as the costs of installing new colour and insertion machinery.

Before the exceptional charges, pre-tax earnings were ahead 41 per cent to £17.9m, despite a newspaper bill 24 per cent higher at £5.5m for the six-month period. Factoring in the costs of the South Quay move, pre-tax profits were £1.8m.

## GEC begins clear-out with £80m Siebe sale

Michael Harrison

GEC's new chief executive, George Simpson, yesterday began the promised clearance sale of its unwanted industrial businesses by announcing the £80m disposal of its automation systems division to the industrial controls group Siebe.

Satchwell Controls, based in Slough, Berkshire, employs just over 1,000 and is Britain's biggest manufacturer and installer of automation systems for industrial and commercial buildings. Siebe is acquiring

the business for cash and assuming its small amount of debt. Last year it made operating profits of £4.9m on sales of £60m.

In total the businesses being disposed of have sales of £400m - less than 3 per cent of group turnover. Other likely candidates for sale include GEC's wire and cables business and office equipment subsidiary.

However, Mr Simpson, who took over from Lord Weinstock last September, is thought to have decided against selling off GEC's medical systems and

semiconductor divisions and its 50 per cent stake in the Creta and Hotpoint consumer electronics business.

The disposal programme, part of a fundamental strategic review of all the group's operations and management structure, was outlined in December alongside GEC's interim results.

GEC has taken a one-off charge of £160m to cover costs associated with the programme but none of this has been used in connection with the Satchwell sale.

### IN BRIEF

- Most personal pensions are a rip-off, according to research *Which?* magazine, the consumer magazine published today. After analysing more than 100 pensions and rating them on flexibility, charges, portability and their performance, *Which?* concluded that most personal pensions are too complex, too inflexible and too expensive. It said the government should start afresh with its legislation and recommended Peps as a good model for simpler pension plans. *Which?* ranked personal pensions from Colonial Direct, Equitable Life, Garmore and M&G as among the "best buys". Among the "worst buys" were Albany Life, Barclays Life, Lincoln National, Scottish Equitable and United Friendly. "Take out one of the worst pensions and your retirement income could be halved," said *Which?*
- The four partners in Airbus Industrie meet in Toulouse today in a bid to reach agreement on converting the aircraft manufacturer into a fully commercial enterprise. The partners, among them British Aerospace with a 20 per cent stake, had intended to sign a binding memorandum of understanding by Christmas, paving the way for a changeover in 1999. But agreement has been held up by a dispute over the structure of the new company and the extent of its powers.
- The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has called on the Hampel Committee on corporate governance to refine the performance related pay criteria for directors. The ABI also suggests that disclosure of the relevant parts of a director's remuneration package could be made in a "more readily identifiable way". The ABI says it is "unfortunate" that a number of companies have used the Greenbury recommendations to give long-term incentive plans (LTIPs) in addition to existing remuneration and incentive schemes. The ABI makes its comments in written evidence to the committee.
- McDonald's Restaurants, owners of the famous hamburger chain, is to create 5,000 new jobs in the UK by opening more than 100 new outlets. The company said the £1.16m investment would lead to full and part-time jobs distributed evenly across the various regions of the country.
- Vodafone's subscriber base grew by more than 20 per cent last year with the addition of more than 468,000 net new subscribers. In the last quarter, more than 332,000 subscribers were connected in the UK, producing over 146,000 net new subscribers.
- Goldsmiths Group, the jewellers' chain, said sales in the four weeks to 31 December rose 12.4 per cent on the year, an early indication UK retailers did well in the peak shopping season. Goldsmiths expects results to 1 February "in line with expectations".

STOCK MARKETS

**FTSE 100**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**Dow Jones\***

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**Nikkei**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

\*New York Jones index & graph of 1200 hours

Indices	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1986/87 High	1986/87 Low	Field(%)
Jones	4067.40	-61.10	-1.5	4116.50	3632.30	3.92
FTSE 100	4067.40	-61.10	-1.5	4508.60	4015.30	3.51
FTSE 250	4469.40	-21.00	-0.5	4568.80	1815.60	3.83
FTSE 350	2017.80	-25.90	-1.3	2043.82	1954.06	3.10
FTSE 400	2176.20	-4.82	-0.2	2244.36	1954.06	3.10
FT Small Cap	1869.78	-23.88	-1.2	2044.66	1791.95	3.77
FT All Share	6400.92	-47.34	-0.7	6580.91	5032.94	2.02
New York*	closed			22686.80	19161.71	0.811
Tokyo	2480.01	-1.8	-0.7	2503.95	10204.87	3.091
Hong Kong	18203.44	-248.01	-1.4	18909.91	2253.36	1.591
Frankfurt	2848.77	-39.08	-1.4	2909.91	2253.36	1.591

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES

**Short sterling\***

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**UK medium gilt**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**US long bond**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

\* City Bank rates current

Money Market Rates			Bond Yields *			
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%)Year Ago
UK	6.15	7.00	7.71	7.42	7.78	7.58
US	5.43	5.69	6.52	5.55	6.74	6.94
Japan	0.38	0.43	1.55	3.04		
Germany	3.09	3.25	5.97	5.93	6.84	6.72

\* Bankers' indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Index	Price (d)	Change (d)	Change (%)	Falls	Price (d)	Change (d)	% Change
Blocomposites Int	865	45	5.5	BYG	432.5	21	4.6
M.L.Laboratories	210.5	7	3.4	Paton	422.5	17	3.9
Thorn	259.5	8	3.2	Inchcape	282.5	10	3.7

CURRENCIES

**£/\$**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**£/DM**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

**£/¥**

1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997

Other bank exchange rates and all Bank Exchange at 1200 hours

Pound				Dollar			
	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.6808	-2.05c	1.5491	\$ (London)	0.5914	-0.02	0.6455
\$ (New York)	1.7125	+2.15c	1.6515	\$ (New York)	0.5938	-0.75	0.6472
DM (London)	2.6068	-3.05p	2.2582	DM (London)	1.5418	+0.07p	1.4965
¥ (London)	165.61	-33.92	164.85	¥ (London)	115.695	-10.67c	105.180
£ Index	95.0	-1.1	84.0	£ Index	89.5	-0.2	95.1

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's change	Index	Latest	14 days	Next Jan		
Oil Brent \$	24.18	+0.40	18.68	RPI	153.9	+2.70c	149.8	15 Jan
Gold \$	386.80	-3.05	393.75	GDP	108.9	+2.30c	105.7	27 Jan
Gold £	216.82	+0.82	254.08	Base Rates	-6.00pc	6.75	-	-



## business

## 1997: A preview of the year ahead



Shedding his reserve: Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, with his fiancée, Andrea Mitchell. They announced their engagement after a 12-year courtship

One thing at least can be predicted with some certainty for 1997 – that there will be a general election in Britain before mid-year. The rest is as unpredictable as ever. Is Wall Street's five-year bull market about to come to an end? Is sterling set to become a safe haven currency? What's going to happen to those hated privatised utilities? Who's going to takeover whom? What sort of economy can the next government look forward to? Who's going to make a splash in 1997? *The Independent's* business writers attempt to provide some answers.

## Higher rates needn't scare investors

This will be the year of rising interest rates. Short-term rates will rise: swiftly in the UK, more slowly in the US and – by the end of 1997 – also begin to rise across continental Europe. The key test for financial markets will be to see how confidently investors can look beyond this cyclical rise and discern the longer-term downward trend. If they are frightened by the rise then it will be a bumpy year for both bonds and currencies; if they can take the long view then the sunlit uplands still beckon. It will be interesting to view the year from Britain. That is not because what happens to UK domestic markets has much influence on the rest of the world. It doesn't. The fall does not wag the dog. Rather it is because the upturn in interest rates will happen here first. It will happen because the new government, whoever is running it, will have

to lean against strong economic growth as one-off costs (from things like the build-up of society conversions to p.l. status) add to strong underlying demand. The result will be strong pressure on the Chancellor, whoever he may be, to get interest rates up fast. The quicker he responds, the less damage there will be to long-term interest rates, but a sharp rise in short rates will inevitably make sterling more attractive. So sterling should remain strong too. How high will short-term rates go and how much effect will this have on the pound? UK base rates will probably end the year at or close to 7 per cent. Anyone who tries to call the exact timing of the rises will be wrong, but a plausible profile will be one more quarter point rise before the election and then another three through the

summer and autumn. The peak in the interest rate cycle? Probably not till well into 1998. Impact on gilts? The key here will be the attitude of the next Chancellor. If Labour does get in, the first Budget of the new government will be scrutinised for any use of mirrors to make the figures look better. My guess is that come what may, gilts will have a difficult year, but if there is the prospect of tighter fiscal policy under Labour than under the Tories, then come 1998 the prospects will look much brighter. The impact on the pound? Well, the problem here is that a lot of that impact is already in the market: sterling shot up in the final quarter of last year

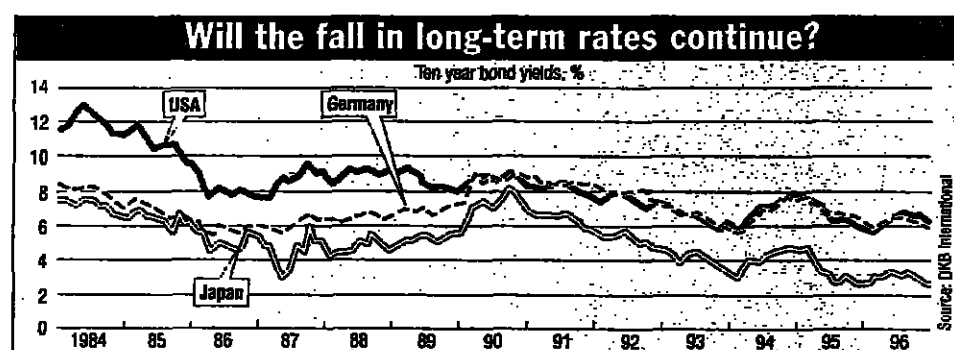
and from being clearly undervalued is now close to its underlying purchasing power parity. Of course currencies can, and do, overshoot. It is perfectly possible that sterling will become too strong during the course of this year. In any case there are two sides to the currency equation and whatever happens to the pound will be determined by what happens to the dollar and/or the German mark. A rational expectation would be for sterling to continue to strengthen through the early part of this year but for that rise to peak by mid-year. But the foreign markets are not noted for their reason, and in any case, with the preparations for EMU they will have bigger fish to fry.

In the US, still the dominant market for the world, there will also be a rise in interest rates. The Federal Reserve has its next policy meeting in early February by which stage it will be clear how sustained the present acceleration is growth is likely to be. The bigger question will be later in the year: will the long expansion in the US come to an end of its own accord or will there have to be several rises in rates to choke it off. Mainstream expectation: a couple of further rises in US rates during the course of this year, but no savage tightening. Providing the Fed does act in February there need be no fall-out in the bond market, but at best bond yields will move sideways. But that does not mean that the 15 year long-term downward trend of bond yields, in the US as well as in continental Europe, is ended. As the graph shows

this is a solid long-term trend. Now at some stage that will end once it becomes clear that the downward trend in inflation cannot proceed any further. But this year I think we just see a pause on that downward path. The dollar? Probably some more strength, as the gradual, patchy recovery continues. But the main influence on the dollar will be what happens to the

European currencies. If the euro is going to be a weak currency, as now seems more and more likely, then the dollar's safe haven status will be enhanced. If plans for the EMU fall to bits – maybe not likely but certainly possible – then expect the mark to resume its status as the world's "best" currency. And so to continental markets. Here the rise in interest rates

will not happen until well into the autumn, maybe not till 1998. Bond markets will take courage from this, but currencies will struggle. The single biggest question for bonds and currencies is whether the long-term downward trend of inflation really solid? I think it is. If so, expect a stormy year but with calm water beyond.



## Predictability gives way to year of living dangerously

"A year of almost unparalleled predictability." This is how a leading economist summed up 1996 in one of the year-end summaries now spilling out of the City investment banks.

It certainly looks as though the results of *The Independent's* annual Golden Guru award for the best economic forecast, due at the end of January, will be unusually close. The past year has brought few surprises.

But 1997 is going to be a year of unusual uncertainty about the outlook for the UK economy. For starters, there will be a lot of politics around. The election campaign will affect business, investor and consumer behaviour for the next few months. It will cast a shadow over share prices and sterling.

Then if, as still looks likely, Labour wins, the economy will move into uncharted waters. It is obvious that the measures introduced by Gordon Brown will be more like Kenneth Clarke's policies than Denis Healey's two decades ago, but there are still big unknowns. What are New Labour's tax plans? Will the Bank of England get more influence over interest rate decisions?

Looking beyond the blinkers of UK politics, there is more uncertainty out in the world in the coming year. Take two examples: share prices on Wall Street and growth on the Continent. Opinions could not be more divided about where the US stock market is heading. Wall Street pundits are predicting either a crash or another year of double-digit growth in

ECONOMICS  
by Diane Coyle

shares. Whichever it is, London is likely to follow suit. Although the links between the stock market and the economy are indirect, a sharp fall – or rise – in share prices would influence investment and consumer confidence.

There is an almost equally deep division of opinion over the outlook for the Continental economies, the main market for British exports. The mainstream consensus is that their struggle to qualify for the single currency will not keep growth so subdued for a second year running.

Yet there are plenty of Euro-pessimists who believe that the efforts of governments on the Continent to reduce their budget deficits to meet the Maastricht criteria will make the next 12 months just as sluggish as the past year. If they are right, the strong pound will guarantee that this spills over into British exports and growth.

The uncertainties in the wider world and in the world of politics amplify the normal sorts of risks attached to economic forecasts.

Forecasts of the UK economy 1997			
	GDP %	Target RPI %	Base rate %
Highest	4.3	4.0	8.25
Lowest	2.8	1.8	5.75
Average	3.5	2.9	7.0
Treasury	3.5	2.5	n/a

Britain's export markets are weak, and without big cuts in interest rates or taxes GDP growth in 1997 will be disappointing. Job insecurity will keep pay rises down even if unemployment falls much further, he predicts.

"If I were a Tory Chancellor who had just had a nerve-racking 18 months of relative stagnation, I would welcome the resurgence of growth in the late summer with open arms and I would nurture it," he concludes.

At the other end of the range lie some of the City economists who see haunting parallels between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, particularly in consumer behaviour. For example, Kevin Gardiner at investment bank Morgan Stanley argues that real wages are rising, more people have jobs, consumer debt-income ratios are low and the windfall of building society share hand-outs and income tax cuts will stimulate spending. Inflation-adjusted spending power, taking account of taxes and mortgages, is 10 per cent higher than a year ago, and will rise faster during 1997. Like the Bank of England, he sees a classic demand-led, inflationary recovery on the horizon.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence to support this outlook, in house prices and high street spending, in falling unemployment and disappointing retail price figures. Although few experts really believe that the UK economy is poised for a re-run of the last boom, none of them expected it last time either.

## Few windfalls ahead in period of consolidation

If 1996 was an eventful year for industry – to take but one example half the electricity sector disappeared into American hands – then 1997 promises to be doubly so.

In no particular order we can expect to see further consolidation in the telecommunications industry, increased merger activity among Europe's defence and aerospace companies and a mopping-up operation to take control of the two regional electricity companies still in independent ownership.

In the motor industry D-Day looms for Rover for this is surely the year when its German owners BMW either make their British acquisition pay off or engage in a radical re-think. Along the way, British Gas intends to do the splits but whether many more decide to follow suit after the disaster of the Hanson merger must be open to question.

Of course the biggest question and the biggest "if" of all for industry is whether it will be operating under a new government by the middle of the year. If it is, then there can be no question but that the privatised utilities will dominate the industrial year – not because of merger mania but because of Labour's promised windfall tax.

Labour has refused to reveal how much the tax will raise (City estimates range from £5bn to £10bn) and who it will hit until after the election and after consultation with the regulators. Clearly the privatised electricity and water industries are most directly in the firing

line. The big fight will be over a second tier of "non-utility" privatisations, including British Telecom and BAA, which have both been lobbying hard to escape the shadow chancellor Gordon Brown's net. Ironically, it is precisely these kinds of companies which can afford to pay the most.

Assuming a Labour government moves quickly to put the tax on the statute books, the rest of the year could be taken up with complex legal arguments as the utilities seek to ambush

cream off any further excesses. To do much more would need primary legislation, a scarce commodity for any new government.

Mr Blair or not, the energy sector will experience labour pains of its own as the gas and electricity industries prepare for the birth of full competition in their domestic markets from 1998. Expect more fireworks in the south of England as the gas liberalisation trials spread out across a wider area. Expect also further slippage in the tim-

ing of full competition in the domestic electricity market. The deadline has already slipped six months to the right and further delays look inevitable as the Recs drag their feet. Whoever wins the election, more power is likely to drift towards the regulators. A landmark court victory just before Christmas gave Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications industry regulator, unique powers to ban behaviour by BT which he deems anti-competitive. It would be surprising if his fellow regulators weren't thinking along similar lines for the industries they police.

A super-charged Mr Cruickshank is just one of the challenges facing BT this year. Its other main task will be to secure approval for the £35bn merger

with MCI, the long-distance US telecoms operator. Bet on the alliance gaining regulatory blessing but bet also that AT&T will not take the competitive threat lying down. Will this be the year that the colossus of the US telecoms industry makes a decisive move into British territory? At one stage it looked as if AT&T might use Energis, the telecoms business put up for sale by the National Grid, as a platform. But the latest indications are that it has dropped out of the bidding. Enter Deutsche Telekom?

While AT&T ponders, the cable industry is reforming under the banner of Cable & Wireless Communications and will pose an increased threat in the telephony market. Watch out too for Iridium, the radio-based telecoms group.

And what of those mature industries as we politely like to call them? Well, the betting must be on BMW grasping the nettle once and for all at Rover and the result could be painful for Midlands car workers.

Meanwhile the American fad for defence mergers looks like crossing the Atlantic. British Aerospace has been doing its bit to drag the rest of Europe into an all-embracing military and civil aerospace alliance. But is this the year when it finally consummates the daddy of all defence mergers – a marriage with GEC?

The timing looks good and in George Simpson, GEC may have the chief executive to pull off a deal. Cometh the hour, cometh the man.

## INDUSTRY

by Chris Godsmark  
and Michael Harrison

the measure. Tony Blair will also face vociferous behind-the-scenes lobbying by utilities taken over since privatisation by US companies. Dieter Helm, director of Oxford Economic Research Associates and a utility expert, believes US lobbying could scupper the tax altogether. "If the Americans bring down the windfall tax by lobbying President Clinton, this could do a lot of damage to Labour. It would mean the party would put its energy into wholesale regulatory reform."

Individual regulators like Jan Byatt at Ofwat would stay, apparently, though boards of non-executives would be created to back them up. The price cap formula used to regulate the utilities would be supplemented by a sliding scale tax designed to

ing of full competition in the domestic electricity market. The deadline has already slipped six months to the right and further delays look inevitable as the Recs drag their feet.

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# Wheeler-dealer frenzy is all set to continue

Media in Britain had a mega-1996, and all the signs point to another year of wheeler-dealer frenzy. Moreover, at least three events in 1997 – the launch of Channel 5, the birth of digital television and further consolidation in the ITV sector – could transform the media landscape out of all recognition.

But before looking at the big-league changes, it might be worth considering a few of the murkier prospects for the sector which, while less dramatic, could have profound implications for many companies.

There will be, for instance, moves toward a wholesale reform of advertising sales at ITV, as the big companies which control the commercial market for Channel 3 seek an end to the controversial "average station price" currently used to sell advertising time. The preferred option is something like "spot" pricing, where an advertiser pays a premium to get its message into a specific time slot.

The change might be worth as much as £100m more a year for ITV, a prospect that most investors have not yet factored in. But there are also going to be negative changes for ITV, if not in 1997 then in 1998, when the Government will begin to phase out the controversial payments made by Channel 4 to ITV under the so-called "safety net" arrangements. These are worth about £90m this year.

Some ITV companies might lessen the blow by seeking to negotiate lower licence fee payments to the Treasury, which

they have a right to do from the end of 1997. Still on TV, Channel 4 could find itself under pressure this coming year. Privatisation may have been put off, following a successful campaign by the chief executive, Michael Grade, to extol the public service mandate of the fourth channel. But there will be further questions about "public service" if Mr Grade continues to spend his hundreds of millions of pounds in advertising money on buying yet more Hollywood sitcoms and series.

But the immediate threat to Channel 4 (and ITV for that matter) is the launch of Britain's last "free" television service, Channel 5, which is expected to be on air by the end of March. The new channel will cost its backers pots of money – at least £180m just to return millions of VCRs up and down the country, a condition of the licence – but it will pay back in spades. With a potential audience of 80 per cent of UK homes, and nearer 90 per cent when you count households able to receive the signal via cable or satellite, Channel 5 will be a near-national service. It will probably lead to a growth in the overall advertising pie, but a large part of its estimated revenues will be poached from Channels 3 and 4. At the very

least, that will put some downward pressure on the wildly inflated prices being charged per minute for commercial advertising, which rose by about 10 per cent (7 per cent in real terms) in 1996.

Meanwhile, consolidation of ITV will be on the agenda, even if the speed (or slowness) with which it occurs could surprise people. Yorkshire-Tyne Tees (to Granada), HTV (to United News & Media) and Grampian (to Scottish Television) are the most likely acquisitions. But in each case, the buyers don't like the high prices they would have to pay, and could decide to wait until much later to pounce.

The upshot, in any event, will be an ITV sector dominated by just two or three companies, able for the first time to present a common front as a truly national network. The implications for the current structure of ITV, with its federal vocation and its much-maligned Network Centre, will be radical. Indeed, there may not be a Network Centre at all, if some of the more reform-minded of the ITV barons get their way.

A general reform of ITV won't come a moment too soon, given the huge challenges that the launch of digital television will present. BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite service, wants to introduce 200 channels

of TV programming and interactive services by the end of 1997. Digital terrestrial television will come a year later, while cable hasn't yet made up its collective mind. The huge fragmentation of the marketplace is bound to hurt traditional broadcasters, unless they themselves manage to secure a role in the digital age. So far, the only ITV companies that appear to be serious about digital are Michael Green's Carlton (which is bidding for a multiplex

licence to operate a digital terrestrial service) and Granada, which has formed a joint venture with BSkyB to launch pay-TV channels.

To make matters more complicated for the commercial players, the BBC has rushed headlong into the digital age, having negotiated a joint venture agreement with US-controlled Flextech to launch pay-TV channels. These will compete directly with the programmes of commercial broad-

casters, and could lead the digital field. After all, the BBC, despite its reputation for bureaucratic sclerosis, makes the best TV programming in Britain and – crucial in a crowded marketplace – has the best-known brand.

Elsewhere in the media, you can expect a few special situations to develop. Pearson will be in the news, as it struggles to agree a new strategy that could see a mammoth corporate restructuring. Newspaper com-

panies will reap the benefits of lower newspaper prices, unless they decide to add new sections to the already groaning products that thump on coffee tables of a Saturday or Sunday. Of the main newspaper groups, both United News & Media and Mirror Group (which owns 46 per cent of *The Independent*) should see operating margins improve.

EMI, the music arm of the now demerged Thorn-EMI, is bound to be the target of a bid,

and probably an agreed one. Favourites include MCA, the film and music giant controlled by drinks company Seagram, and the perennial predators Disney and Bertelsmann. Without a doubt, the media business, which has outperformed most other industries in the past five years, is set for another year of above-average growth. The uncertainties are rife, of course, but it would be no bad thing to stay overweighted.



Thinking big: Rupert Murdoch wants to introduce 200 channels of TV programming by the end of 1997

Photograph: Reuters

## Focus on good quality shares and you won't go too far wrong

The maturity of the current bull market in equities was brought home on New Year's Eve when a British Gas engineer, a proponent of nothing, least of all the heating he had come to fix, began expounding his investment philosophy. His thoughts were a timely reminder of the old adage about shoe-shine boys on Wall Street – when the gas man cometh with share tips a crash must surely be around the corner.

His enthusiasm for shares brought to mind another, no doubt apocryphal, tale from 1929 when a lift-boy at JP Morgan plucked up the courage to ask the great man himself what he thought the market would do that day. "It will fluctuate, boy, it will fluctuate," was the banker's considered response.

Morgan's message was that a proper investor, as opposed to the speculator he rightly assumed the boy had become, tried not to worry about the state of the stock market but focused on good quality individual shares. Anyone who lived through the bear market of the early 1970s, however, knows that not even the best shares can shrug off a determined sell-off. Between the spring of 1972 and the end of 1974, the stock market lost almost three quarters of its value, so it is no wonder at the end of a year in which the Dow Jones index rose by 27 per cent, dragging the London market up on its coat-tails, that it is not just gas engineers spinning out their overtime who fret about the direction of the market in 1997.

### STOCK MARKETS

by Tom Stevenson

To put things in perspective, if the London market were to stage a re-run of the early 1970s, the FTSE 100 index, which closed 1996 at a record high of 4118.5, would bottom out shortly before the millennium celebrations at a low of 1,112.0. If bull markets are said to climb a wall of worry, they don't get much steeper than that.

In an election year when the first change of government in 18 years looks probable, with investors struggling to acclimatise themselves to an economy which threatens to have discovered steady growth without inflation, and with stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic flirting with record highs, it is no surprise that the City is sharply divided on the future direction of share prices.

The bear argument is essentially this: Wall Street is grossly overvalued on a number of measures – according to one, the aggregate value of stock market quoted companies is now for the first time ever greater than the total US gross domestic product. As a result, the Dow will almost certainly experience a sharp correction sometime soon and, while London is not so pricey on fundamental measures, the two markets fortunes are so closely entwined that a fall in the US will inevitably spill over here.

Talk to Smith New Court's Andrew Smithers, one of the Square Mile's doziest Jeremiahs, and he will paint you a convincing apocalyptic vision of an overheating UK economy, fuelled by the failure of Kenneth Clarke in at least the last two Budgets to raise taxes or cut spending. Fiscal and monetary policy are out of balance, he says, and interest rates will have to rise to make good the shortfall. That will prick the economic bubble, sterling will fall, and the door will open for Britain's old enemy stagflation. The market will end the year well below its current level.

The problem with that sort of view, apart from the fact that for most of the past 75 years it has been wrong, is that it doesn't sell shares. No surprise then that Mr Smithers, and his bearish co-

horters in the fund management business like PDFM's Tony Dye, are the exception rather than the rule. For the rest of the City, a watered down version of the bullish line taken by NatWest's Bob Semple is the favoured safe option.

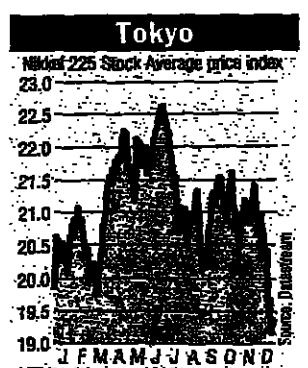
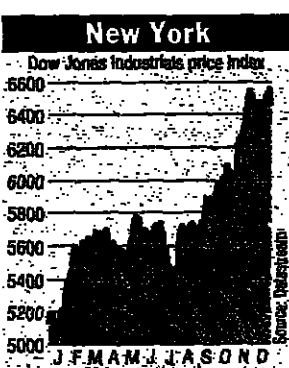
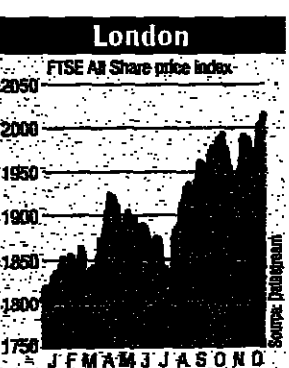
Mr Semple's view is that an incoming Labour government will inherit an economic environment many of us thought we would never see in our lifetimes: solid economic growth, low inflation, falling unemployment and the external account in broad balance. Gordon Brown's first budget will set a prudent fiscal policy (with one eye on keeping Maastricht options open) and an aggressive upward move in interest rates to 7 per cent will take the edge off consumer spending.

That should ensure a longer-lived economic cycle, inflation will fall back towards the Government's 2.5 per cent target in the second half of the year and gilt yields will fall. The equity market, already underpinned by

continued strong earnings and dividend growth, will look increasingly cheap and large amounts of institutional cash sitting on the sidelines will push the market to new highs, possibly 4,600 by year-end.

The truth probably lies somewhere between the Semple and Smithers scenarios and we would expect the FTSE 100 to close 1997 at around 4,300 and the Dow Jones index, driven by rising earnings and a maintained rating, at close to 7000. The Nikkei, which has threatened recovery for four years now, will have another indifferent 12 months.

Consumer stocks will continue to benefit from rising high street spending, benefiting retailers, leisure companies and the brewers. Growth stocks will struggle to repeat the last two buoyant years and high yields, the market's dog during that time, will have their day. The gas man will still be reading the *Investor Chronicle* and the market will still be fluctuating, boy.



## Feel-good consumers exude a glow

1996 was the year when retailers finally began to believe in a consumer recovery. High street spending was boosted by lower interest rates and a housing market which started to show signs of a revival. If anything 1997 should be even better.

Consumer spending is still growing and should be buoyed yet further by windfall gains from the Halifax and Woolwich Building Society flotations.

The forecast 7-8 per cent increase in house prices this year will boost not just home furnishings and DIY retailers but the whole sector. A feel-good factor of sorts will cast a warmer glow.

1997 also promises to be a year of corporate activity in retailing. The mail order market is one that is ripe for shake-up. With Sainsbury's and Marks & Spencer's Freemans mail order business likely to be sold to Littlewoods, a new era is already dawning.

But with Great Universal

### TAILING

by Nigel Cope

Stores under more dynamic management and Burton moving into the sector with the Innovations and Racing Green acquisitions the sector is already looking more interesting than it has done for years.

Also look out for a mail order move by Marks & Spencer. Britain's leading retailer already has a housewares catalogue. More are likely to follow. Top of the list for corporate action is the rambling Sears group which had an accident-prone 1996 which chief executive Liam Strong would probably sooner forget.

For Sears, and Mr Strong in particular, 1997 is a crunch year. With Freemans up for sale Sears looks more and more like a break-up candidate. Architect of the re-structure is likely to be

Mr Strong himself who has found his position under threat. Sears could be split up into a series of smaller businesses with the highly successful Selfridges department store as a stand-alone business with healthy expansion prospects in other major cities. The women'swear chains which include Wallis and Miss Selfridge could form another group. If Sears' Christmas trading statement is unimpressive the clamour for a re-structure, or new management, will grow.

This year is also judgement time for another one of last year's losers – House of Fraser, the department store group. The new management under John Coleman will be given a period of grace to settle in and effect a turnaround. But if the

long-awaited recovery is not forthcoming then the predators could move in.

The supermarket sector looks set for another fascinating year. 1996 was characterised by cut throat competition as Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury all profited at Sainsbury's expense. This year promises to see no let-up in the competition. But there is the added twist that all four of the big groups will be operating under new management. One question is how Asda will fare this year as Archie Norman takes a less prominent role.

But the bigger question is this – will 1997 see a Sainsbury renaissance? After a year on the ropes Sainsbury's needs a good run to claw back ground lost to Tesco. More details on the Sainsbury's Bank will be available this month and this could prove a key development as Sainsbury's attempts to re-claim the marketing initiative after a year during which it always

looked to be following. Sainsbury's may need one of its rivals to slip up to really make headway but with so many strengths – including its brand name – the prospects of a turnaround look promising.

Indeed brands will be a key issue again this year. The high street and the supermarket sector are gradually polarising between the winners which have strong brand names and the rest, which do not. Next, Dixons, Argos and John Lewis are just some of the retailers whose brand strength has enabled them to develop market leading positions. The gap between them and the secondary retail players will continue to widen.

Finally, electronic shopping will make more progress this year. A new standard on the encryption of credit card numbers will make Internet transactions more secure and remove a major stumbling block to acceptance of the new medium.

## Unfinished business as shake-out continues

### FINANCE

by Peter Rodgers

There is a much unfinished business waiting for the financial services industry to get its teeth into during 1997. Banking, insurance and securities are at different stages of a shake-out that is breathtaking in its scope and which is far from finished.

Banking will be the highest-profile case, because during the spring and summer four large building societies, of which the largest is the Halifax, are to convert to banks.

This will give them the flexibility to raise new capital whenever their shareholders are willing, and they are likely to use their new resources to intensify competition with the traditional clearing banks.

It has been well over a decade since the big banks started talking about the need for a rationalisation of their branch networks and large reductions in costs, in preparation for increased competition on the high street.

The toughest competition for the traditional banks looks like being in the more traditional areas of branch banking, where the converted building societies will be bringing heavy pressure to bear in 1997.

But it will not be branch banking as it used to be known. Rather, the branches have become marketing centres for a range of financial products, from mortgages to insurance, and share-dealing services, most of which are processed in centralised factories.

Converting building societies have been as anxious as banks to develop their insurance businesses and other financial services. They are likely to continue to snap up life insurance companies, copying the example of the most successful of all the high street groups, Lloyds TSB.

This will increase the incentive for the insurance industry – already due for an overhaul before banks began to trespass on its patch – to rationalise.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the majority of general and life insurers resembled the banks a quarter century ago, when the abolition of a long established lending cartel introduced competition and started a restructuring that is still continuing.

Life and general insurers have managed to remain fragmented and relatively inefficient, ill-prepared for the challenges of modern marketing methods.

The intense competitive pressure and the need to modernise their businesses led to one large merger last year between Royal and Sun Alliance. The conversion of Norwich Union to a stock market quoted company, raising extra capital to strengthen its business,

will make further consolidation in the rest of the industry still more likely.

It would be surprising if 1997 ended without mergers involving other quoted composite insurers, such as GRE or Commercial Union. The odds must also be at least even on a takeover of a large British composite insurer from abroad.

Life insurance companies will be under similar pressures. Predictions three years ago of a halving of the number of active companies by the end of the century look as if they will be proved right.

In London, the new Stock Exchange trading system will have nothing like the catalytic effect on the industry of Big Bang in 1986, when fixed commissions were abolished.

The modern version of Big Bang is more likely to be found elsewhere in the City, and will be a result of monetary union, which is prompting a rationalisation of foreign exchange dealings rooms.

The final piece of unfinished business is political. The City need not be too worried for the moment about Labour's reforms of financial regulation, if it wins power, because they are likely to be on the back burner during the first year or two.

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# Barnes determined to make return to the limelight

If he were in show business, Paul Barnes would be described as having worked for 10 years to be an overnight success.

A striker with a healthy, though relatively unnoticed, scoring record was suddenly propelled into the nation's awareness with one glorious and surprising flourish.

No one expected lowly York City to provide anything much more than doughty victims when they went to Old Trafford in the Coca-Cola Cup last season. True, Manchester United did not have their best team out, but there were seven internationals in the 11 who should have been more than enough to cope with a team struggling in the Second Division.

Instead, in Alex Ferguson's words, United were given a football lesson. York won 3-0, Barnes scored two of the goals and for a hairline offside decision would have finished with a hat-trick to take back to

Bootham Crescent along with his man of the match award. It is still, by some way, the best night of the 29-year-old's career.

Nobody expects this to be his only brush with fame. He harbours ambitions to play in the Premiership, but more immediate is the prospect of playing Liverpool tomorrow.

Burnley, Barnes' new club, go to Anfield in the third round of the FA Cup and, as he says: "If the match against United proved anything, it's that anything's possible if you believe in yourselves."

Barnes has always had a belief in his ability even though his salad days were spent largely in the reserves at Notts County and Stoke City. Kenny Dalglish was his role model, but it took a £50,000 move to York, at the age of 24, to allow his natural scoring skills to come to the fore with 76 goals in 148 League appearances.

The man who bought him, who is now Burnley's assistant



**Guy Hodgson talks to the Burnley striker who is used to Cup upsets and will be eager for more at Anfield tomorrow**

manager, John Ward, described Barnes as the "final piece in the jigsaw" and Alan Little, who succeeded Ward as the York manager, agrees. "It was a lot of money for the club in those days, but he repaid it many times over with his goals," Little said. "He has pace and ability which worries defenders and if he misses he goes straight back for another goal. He has no fear."

A brief £350,000 transfer to Birmingham City followed - where he also averaged a goal every other game - before he moved to Burnley in September. "I had five months at St Andrew's under Barry Fry," he said, "but, when Trevor Fran-

cis became manager, he brought in Paul Furlong and Mike Newell for £2.5m so it was clear that my opportunities would be limited. I went to see him and told him I wanted first-team football and he was superb. He told me he didn't want me to go, but if I got set up somewhere he wouldn't stand in my way."

"I don't regard Burnley as a step down. You only have to go to Turf Moor to realise that this is a big club, the proverbial sleeping giant. It is a Second Division club that's geared to the First Division. I also knew the manager, Adrian Heath, from when we played together at Stoke and, of course, there

was John Ward. I didn't need much persuasion."

Barnes has 13 goals this season, including one against Walsall in the second-round replay last week, and he is playing well enough for Burnley to be able to transfer-list their main striker, Kurt Nogan. "We're going well in the League," Barnes said, "and the team is beginning to play well. There's no reason why we shouldn't do ourselves justice against Liverpool."

Which was just about where York were when they met Manchester United. "We went to Old Trafford determined not to let ourselves down, but once the game started the lads suddenly realised maybe we could do something here. The confidence grew when we took the lead, but to come away with a 3-0 win was unbelievable."

"Alex Ferguson said afterwards that York had done a good job on United and my chief memory was of 80 per cent of the fans staying behind to

clap us off the pitch, which was a marvellous feeling. I also won the man of the match award, which is rare for an away player. The whole evening was wonderful."

What about Anfield? "I've played a few reserve matches there and even when it is practically empty it is a magnificent ground. We visited the museum on one trip and to see the exhibits and experience the sense of history gives you an idea just how big Liverpool are."

"I haven't given up hope that I will reach the Premiership one day. Playing against the likes of Gary Ballister and Steve Bruce gave me a taste of what it is like with the best defenders and it is something I would like to do on a regular basis."

An encounter with Liverpool's back five will simply provide him with a temporary brush against the country's elite. If he does well then, Burnley will probably do so too.



Paul Barnes in his York City days, when he won the man of the match award at Old Trafford Photograph: Empics

## Matchless but modest Miguel

Miguel Indurain, who collected nicknames as readily as he picked up road-race titles during the five years when he dominated the Tour de France, may have retired but he will continue to be revered as a hero in his native Spain.

The "Colossus of Roads", "Big Mig", "the Sphinx", "Singing", however cycling aficionados around the world preferred to refer to him, Indurain became one of the greats of the sport and his popularity at home did not wane even though, having become the first man to win the Tour five times in a row, he failed to make it six last year.

When the Tour crossed the border into Spain and passed through his home town of Pamplona last July, the phenomenal, emotional welcome he received could not have been greater had he been wearing the coveted yellow jersey of Tour leader. Instead the colours rested with Denmark's Bjarne Riis, who kept them until the Paris finish. Yet Indurain, his brown eyes filled with tears at his reception, was still the only champion for his fellow Navarrese. "Five is enough," one banner proclaimed.

Weeks after leaving the Tour as one of the vanquished Indurain gave Spain something else to cheer when he won an Olympic gold medal. The Atlanta time trial was to be his final bow. Retirement rumours rumbled on through the season until this week when, in keeping with his manner, he slipped quietly into the Hall of Fame to end an admirable reign.

Indurain's interest in bike racing was fired when he was 11, because a sandwich and a drink was given to each lad who finished a race in his home town. Then he was hungrily growing towards his 6ft 2in, his physical stature aided by working on his father's farm at Villava. Physically he was a natural for basketball. He tried it and also became the 400 metres running champion of Navarre, but he was destined for the chain gang.

Guided by Jose Miguel Echavarri, who left his bar in Pamplona to become a team manager, Indurain bloomed. His first Tour de France in

**Robin Nicholl looks back over the career of a man mountain called Indurain, who is the only cyclist to have won five Tours de France in succession**

1985 lasted four days before he was ordered to pull out. This gentle introduction made Indurain thirst for more. Four years later, he won his first Tour stage.

Applause, medals and admiration came, but nothing would change his way of life. He was the people's champion. The Tour with all its agonies and frustrations tried its worst, but Indurain was true to his nickname of the Sphinx.

In the heat of impending victory Indurain phoned his mother, Isabel. He was not seeking comfort in her motherly

Indurain. A heart almost twice the normal size, a slow heart beat, and a lung capacity twice that of the average man of his age. Indurain's extra long thigh bones also gave him more leverage for pedalling, and that was the key to the speed that gave him the victories in Tour time trials that were the foundation for those five victories.

His mentality, as much as his physique, was to be admired. "Miguel is a lord," Echavarri said. "Eddy Merckx would grind and humble his rivals. Miguel is considerate and does not rule in such a fashion."

Indurain always treated his team like a family. "The riders are my brothers and Echavarri is the father. I never scream or shout at my team-mates. Aggression does not make me a better rider. Everyone makes mistakes. I do, and it is best to forgive."

After his third Tour triumph, streets were named in Indurain's honour, even a hymn sung his praises. Spain's King Juan Carlos greeted him on another triumphal return to Spain, and when it came to sportsman of the year, the likes of Seve Ballesteros had to settle for being voted into second place. When Indurain hit the Tour road in July Spanish TV ratings soared, and peaked on his triumphal parade along the Champs-Élysées. Programmers could be running repeats next July as their superstar settles for a quieter life with his wife and family, and looks forward to the next harvest down on the farm.

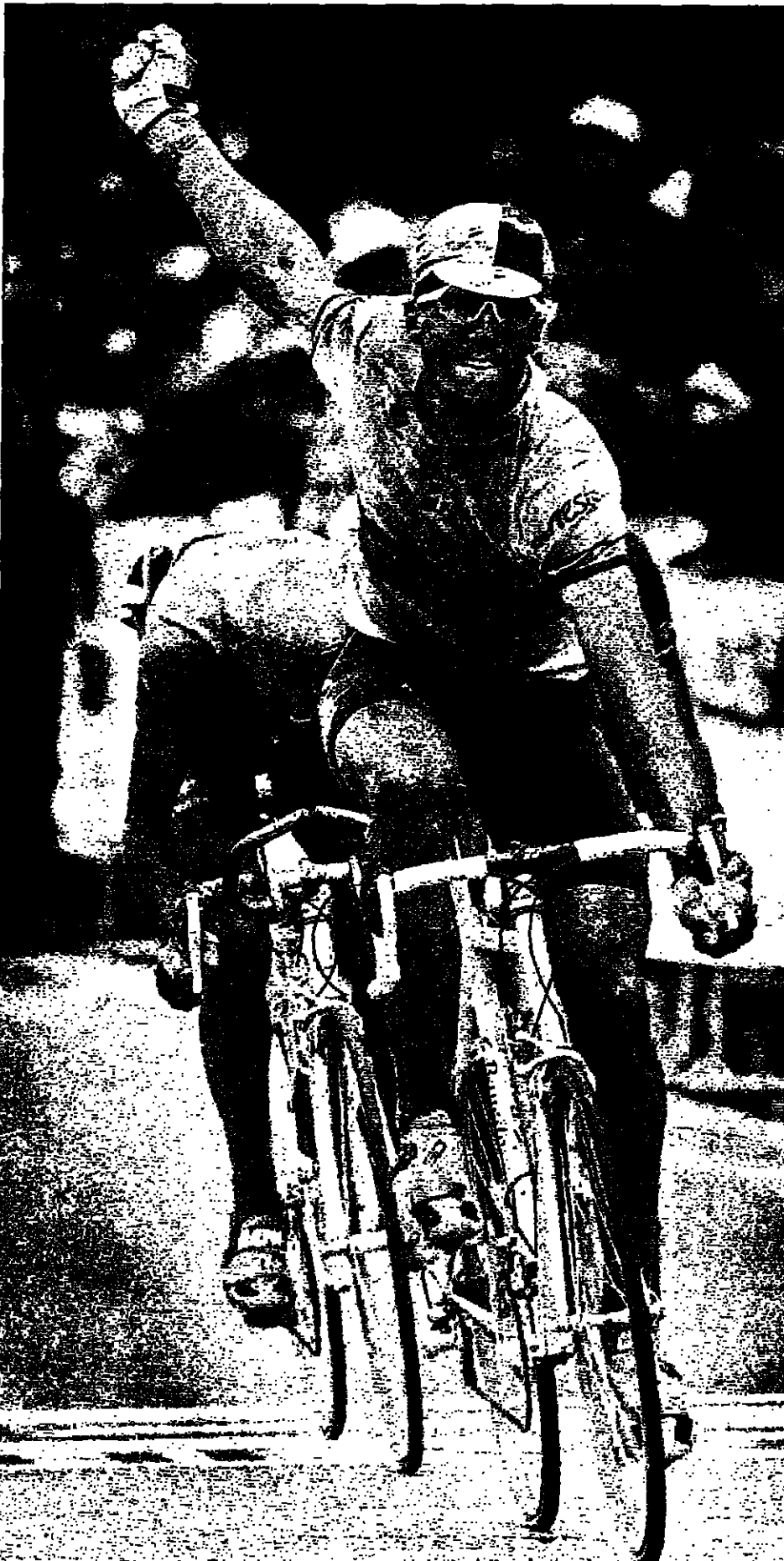
Fame could never spoil Indurain. His example in deed and manner will be hard to follow. Five Tours de France, two Tours of Italy, a world title, the world hour record, and Olympic gold would make many stick out their chests, but as he said after a Tour victory: "I am proud of what I have done, but you must keep a perspective. It's just a bicycle race after all."

**MIGUEL INDURAIN FACT FILE**  
1964 Born 16 July at Villava, Spain  
1985 Third place with Reynolds team; Tour de France, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995  
1986 Tour de France, 62nd, Tour de France, abandoned  
1987 Tour de France, 57th  
1988 Tour de France, 47th  
1989 Tour de France, 17th, won two stages  
1990 Tour de France, abandoned  
1991 Tour de France, 10th, won one stage  
1992 Tour de France, 21st, Tour de France, 1st, won two individual time trials  
1993 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
1994 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
1995 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
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2020 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
2021 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
2022 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
2023 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
2024 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st  
2025 Tour de France, 1st, Tour de France, 1st

tones, all he wanted to know was whether the family had harvested the barley crop.

Indurain once raced 16 miles on mountain roads with a double fracture of his wrist, and his only publicised acknowledgement to pain was when another rider accidentally stood on his stockinged foot. Indurain's shout was quoted throughout the Spanish media. "Everyone tells me that I never look as if I am suffering, but when I see videos of the races I always remember the pain I had to endure."

He was as cool as an iceberg, and just as dangerous. It is his unspoken depths of resolve that sink his rivals, but Echavarri always pointed out the physical



Miguel Indurain acknowledges another of the many triumphs which made him one of the greatest cyclists of all time Photograph: Allsport

## Stevenage in bold pursuit of twin targets

**Non-League notebook**  
RUPERT METCALF

The only GM Vauxhall Conference fixture to beat the winter weather on New Year's Day saw the defending champions, Stevenage Borough, secure a spectacular 6-1 win at Slough Town to climb to third place in the table.

Stevenage are a daunting 15 points behind the leaders, Kidderminster Harriers, but they have five games in hand - and they are not letting tomorrow's scheduled FA Cup trip to Birmingham City distract them from their main objective this season. "If we could swap places with Kidderminster, we would," Paul Fairclough, the Stevenage manager, said, "but this club loves a challenge. The Cup run is great, but the league is more important and we still think we can win it."

Wednesday's result at Slough did his side's self-belief no harm. "We were most surprised to find the game was on, but it was a great confidence-booster ahead of the Cup tie. And we've got a message for Birmingham - we're not just going there to enjoy the day, we're going there to win."

Stevenage were drawn at home for the third-round tie but the match was soon switched to St Andrew's on

police advice. When it will be played remains to be seen - City have had their last two home games postponed and a hot-air balloon covering the pitch failed to save Wednesday's fixture against Manchester City.

David Sullivan, Birmingham's joint-owner, might not be too upset if Borough have to wait for their big day out. "We want a perfect pitch to play Stevenage on," he said, "and don't want to give them any possible advantage by staging the game on a substandard pitch."

The winter weather prevented play at Bromsgrove Rovers, so Kidderminster will have to wait to try and gain revenge for their unexpected Boxing Day 2-1 home defeat to their Worcestershire rivals. Harriers have, however, signed up their highly-rated striker, Lee Hughes, until the end of the 1998-99 season. Hughes, 20, has scored 21 goals this season. "He is more valuable to us on the pitch than he is as money in the bank," Kidderminster's manager, Graham Allner, said.

Peter Davenport, the former Nottingham Forest, Manchester United and England forward, has become Southport's caretaker manager following the resignation before Christmas of Steve Joel. Davenport, who had been Joel's assistant, intends to carry on playing for the Haig Avenue side.

## India made to suffer for bad catching

**Cricket**

South Africa 280-4 v India

India were made to pay for missed chances as South Africa built up a commanding position on the first day of the second Test in Cape Town yesterday.

Gary Kirsten and Daryll Cullinan both survived chances and made their opponents pay with a third-wicket partnership of 114, a record against India. Their stand eclipsed the 60 runs Kepler Wessels and Peter runs Kepler Wessels and Peter Kirsten put on at Durban four years ago, and helped South Africa close on 280 for 4.

South Africa won the toss in good batting conditions to heap good pressure on India, who were trounced in the first Test. The tourists were soon on the back foot again as Kirsten, who was dropped twice before he had scored double figures, hit 103 and Cullinan, who was dropped once, a debut to the Karnataka medium pacer, Doddanarashiah Ganesh.

Scoreboard, Digest, page 27

## England to mark Kersey's death

The England team will wear black armbands in the third one-day international against Zimbabwe in Harare today as a mark of respect to the Surrey wicketkeeper Graham Kersey.

The 25-year-old cricketer lost his fight for life on New Year's Day after suffering severe head injuries in a car crash in Brisbane on Christmas Eve.

The Surrey captain, Alec Stewart, on tour with England, said: "We have lost not only a great cricketer, but also a tremendous team man. He was, without doubt, the most popular man on the staff; a true players' player."

Kersey, born in Plumstead, south London, was spending the winter in Australia, playing for the Western Suburbs District Cricket Club in Brisbane. The former Kent player, who moved to The Oval in 1993, was voted Surrey's Player of the Year in 1995 and was capped last September.

The Surrey chief executive, Paul Sheldon, told Radio 5 Live: "As you'd expect we are all completely numb and devastated by the whole thing. "It was such a shock on



Kersey: 'A players' player'

Christmas Eve to get the news and unfortunately he did not make his fight for life over Christmas and we heard the terrible news yesterday."

Kersey, a talented, athletic and tidy keeper, and a dogged batsman, played in 53 first-class matches, claiming 169 catches and making more than 1,500 runs at a respectable average of 23.20. In one-day appearances, Kersey had 33 victims and a half-century to his credit.

## Pakistanis in protest at fans' conduct

Australian Cricket Board officials are investigating claims that several Pakistani players were verbally abused by the crowd during Wednesday's limited overs international in Sydney.

The players' identities have not been disclosed, but they have complained they were victims of racism during the World Series match that the tourists won by four wickets.

Police arrested eight men for going on to the playing field, including one man who slid stomach-down into the stumps, and removed 86 spectators for unruly behaviour. Another six spectators were arrested on charges including offensive behaviour.

Australia's captain, Mark Taylor, said: "I think everyone has been disappointed at various times with crowds elsewhere, and we seem to be following suit."

The New South Wales bowler Anthony Stuart has been called into the Australian squad to replace the injured Paul Reiffel for Sunday's one-day international against the West Indies in Brisbane.

## Gimelstob shocks Philippoussis

**Tennis**

Little-known teenager Justin Gimelstob recorded the biggest win of his short career when he upset Australia's Mark Philippoussis to steer the United States to the final of the Hopman Cup mixed team event in Perth yesterday.

Gimelstob, ranked 151 in the world, outslugged the 30th-ranked Australian 7-6, 4-6, 7-6 in a match lasting nearly two and a half hours to carry the US team to an unassailable 2-0 lead and a place in tomorrow's final.

"That was a big win, probably the biggest of my career so far," the New Jersey-born right-hander said after his first singles victory in Perth.

Chanda Rubin, the world No 17, who has not lost a singles tie in the eight-team tournament, had accounted for Nicole Pietrangeli 7-5, 6-0 to give the US team the early advantage.

Gimelstob, 19, arrived in Perth only nine hours before his first match against Guy Forget on Sunday. He was on a beach holiday in Florida when he was

called up as a late replacement for Richey Reneberg whose wife was due to give birth.

Gimelstob turned professional last June and his previous best performance was a quarter-final place at the Scottsdale tournament in the United States last year.

In the other Group A tie, the top seeds, Croatia, who lost 2-1 to the United States in a seven-hour match on Wednesday, were handed a 3-0 victory by France after Guy Forget forfeited due to blisters on his hand. Romania kept alive their chances of reaching the final with a 3-0 victory over Germany in Group B.

The top seed Thomas Muster, angered by mobile phone users, dropped a set and took more than two hours to beat Norway's Christian Ruud for a place in the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open in Doha.

The Austrian needed two hours and 13 minutes to defeat Ruud 6-2, 3-6, 7-5 and set up a last-eight match against the American Jim Courier, the eighth seed.

## Albania

Last month we reported that Mario Kempes, Argentina's 1978 World Cup hero, was to become the first foreign coach in Albania when he joined the First Division club, Lushnja. Now we are glad to put the record straight. The first foreign coach in the impoverished Balkan country did indeed arrive this season - but in September, not December, and he is a 49-year-old Welshman called Ken Jones.

No World Cup winners' medals feature in Jones' career - he played 70 League games for Wrexham, Crystal Palace and Swindon - but his Albanian adventure is just as remarkable as that of Kempes. After his League days ended Jones joined the police force and played for, coached and managed the Great Britain police side. He also spent five years coaching Stafford Rangers, but has not been involved in club football for several years.

Now, though, Jones is coaching Albania Tabak, a First Division club from the town of Librazhd. "It was arranged by British Executive Services Overseas [a government-funded agency] and I went over there in September," Jones said yesterday. "I go back in February after their winter break. They wanted a foreign coach to raise the club's profile."

"I've got 24 professional players to work with, but the best-paid only earns about £90 a month," Jones added. "The facilities are not good." Nevertheless, Jones is doing his best in his Balkan outpost and has steered his side up to seventh place in the League by the winter break.

When he returns to Albania next month, an English fire engine will be making the same journey. The town of Librazhd did not have one, so, with the help of the Staffordshire Emergency Humanitarian Aid Group, Jones has arranged the provision of medical supplies plus the surplus fire engine. Now there's an achievement that Mario Kempes might struggle to emulate...



**Cyprus**

Football fans in Cyprus have been gripped by allegations of a betting scandal involving their national team.

The Cypriot Football Association has demanded a government inquiry into allegations that last month's World Cup qualifier against Bulgaria was rigged. It wants an investigation into bookmakers' accounts to find out how much money was bet on Cyprus to lose the match - and who placed the bets.

This follows local media allegations that some of the Cyprus players had bet large sums of money on their team losing. The Bulgarians won 3-1. "We want a thorough, in-depth investigation," the FA chairman, Marios Lefkariitis, said. "What concerns us is that the integrity of football is at stake and even though we are talking about rumours we are embarrassed and want to clear the whole situation up."

The media allegations do not mention any specific player, but the FA has admitted that the sums bet on the match are enough to arouse suspicion, saying about £30,000 was bet on the game - 10 times the usual amount. Bookmakers started rejecting bets when they became suspicious, a parliamentary inquiry was told this week. Costas Kouskounakis, the FA vice-chairman, told the parliamentary inquiry: "I can only say the performance of some players [in the match against Bulgaria] was not as it normally is in other games... but this could easily be countered with an excuse, like they had the flu."

Rupert Metcalf



## sport

**RACING:** The tide-washed sands of nature's all-weather gallop underpin a small trainer's attempt to keep pace with his peers



Coasting to victory: Coome Hill relaxes after completing the daily beach exercises at Bude which form part of the training schedule taking him towards the Cheltenham Gold Cup

Photograph: Robert Hallam

## Strands of hope shape a golden horizon

Before the east wind intervened, the feature race at Sandown tomorrow was to be the chase named in memory of Peter Cazalet, trainer to royalty in the immediate post-war years and a man who might be slightly perplexed by the modern way of preparing racehorses. What with equine swimming pools, all-weather gallops, trachea washes and blood counts, it is sometimes difficult to tell where the training duties end and those of the scientist begin.

Yet one old-fashioned virtue can still prove invaluable in

these hi-tech times – the ability to improvise. The main gallop on the farm in Cornwall where Walter Dennis prepares Coome Hill, is currently as solid as Alaskan permafrost, but while many of Lambourn's leading names are forced to leave their string in their boxes, Dennis keeps his stable star on the boil thanks to some unseasonal trips to the beach at Bude.

Coomo Hill is not the first racehorse to benefit from exercising on the beach. Red Rum and, more recently, Nor-

ton's Coin enjoyed regular gallops along the strand, and the parallel between Coome Hill and the 1990 Gold Cup winner is particularly striking. Like Sirrell Griffiths, 56-year-old Dennis is a farmer who trains a small stable of horses as a sideline. Give him a good one, however, and he will prepare it with as much care and talent as any of his better-known peers.

"The beach isn't ideal," Dennis, who like Griffiths takes personal charge of his best horse at work, said yesterday, "but at least you can keep them

### Greg Wood on the racehorse taking the Red Rum route to big-race success

moving. The horses enjoy it; the only problem is that the sand is quite firm and if you go too quick, you can jar them up. So we go at just below half-pace, to keep them right."

The Midway/Cazalet Chase at Sandown had long been planned as Coome Hill's next stepping point on the path to the Gold Cup at Cheltenham in March, and a valuable race in its own right for which the

gelding might well have been favourite, but Dennis is philosophical about losing it to the elements.

"It might not be a bad thing," the trainer said. "I think Coome Hill's ideal trip is three and a quarter miles, though Jamie (Osborne) seems to think he'd do the job [over another three furlongs] easily enough. But it was a race which came at just the right time for him, and ide-

ally he'd want a couple more before Cheltenham. We'll just have to keep our options open and hope we can find them."

Dennis's attempt to become the second farmer-trainer in recent memory to win the Gold Cup will differ from Sirrell Griffiths's in one respect at least. Norton's Coin, as anyone who backed him will not need reminding, started at 100-1, while Coome Hill is already at single-figure odds with some bookies for the chasing championship.

"Someone must have had a

fair old bet on him," the trainer said, "because Coral have brought him back to 9-1. I'm a bit surprised he's at those odds, but I suppose the way he won the Hennessy caught the attention. He stayed on terrifically from the last and he's the sort of horse who finds a lot of off the bridle. He's such a well-mannered horse, and if you give him a crack, he'll quicken up."

Coomo Hill's three victories this season have demonstrated Dennis's talents as a trainer, but as he admits, "we give priority to the farm because that's what

provides us with a living. The big boys can make an investment to bring in the customers, but we have to finance ourselves." As a result, the local beach seems sure to be as close as the Dennis string gets to an all-weather gallop for some time to come.

"We could put one in, but take away Coome Hill and I might not need it any more," Dennis says. "No, I don't think I'll be investing in one of those for now." Peter Cazalet, you suspect, would thoroughly approve.

## Extra cards ride to the rescue

Even the harshest critics of the British Horseracing Board should be able to find little to complain about regarding the way in which racing's ruling body has coped with the cold snap, writes John Cobb. The board's willingness to reschedule important races and the addition of standby all-weather cards are welcome developments, as is the scheduling of extra jumps meetings, a move which was announced yesterday.

An extra seven cards have been added to the National Hunt programme as part of a package of relief designed to ease the impact of the spiralling list of fixture abandonments.

With 49 meetings already lost to the weather, the BHB acted with the Levy Board to make up for lost opportunities by sanctioning replacement meetings, extra funding for divided races and enhanced prize money for key events.

The fixtures, four in the

North and three in the Midlands, will be staged between 14 and 23 January, the first of them at Leicester. But with the freeze likely to continue into next week more meetings may yet be programmed.

The BHB's racing director,

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Absolute Magic (Southwell 1.00)  
NB: Jay-Owe-Two (Southwell 2.30)

Paul Greaves, said: "Last season we had a dreadful time from Boxing Day to New Year, but this time the cold weather seems to be biting longer and harder. There is a chance that the weather could improve by the week beginning 12 January. But, even if these and others are lost, we will continue to do as much as we can."

Replacement cards: Leicester, 14 January; Carlisle, 20 January; Market Rasen, 21 January; Wetherby, 23 January; Uttoxeter, 24 January; York, 27 January; Warrack, 28 January.

## Maamur the rumour as odds tumble again

Maamur is proving mysteriously popular in betting on the Cheltenham Gold Cup. The Tim Forster-trained chaser, cut in price by both Ladbrokes and William Hill on Wednesday, had his odds chopped yesterday from 33-1 to 25-1 by the race sponsor, the Tote.

Maamur has not run since his win in the Ritz Club Chase at last year's Cheltenham Festival and holds no imminent en-

gagements. His stable has denied knowledge of a gamble on the nine-year-old and reportedly will not return him to action until the going softens.

Ground conditions are also proving a problem for Mary Reveley as she attempts to saddle three challengers for the Ladbrokes Hurdle at Leopardstown tomorrow week. Express Gift, Penny A Day and Executive Design are all in line for the contest, but with snow and frost threatening her gallops at Saltburn on Teesside she may be forced to box them up and take them to the beach.

Penny A Day, the 10-1 second favourite with the sponsor, will be the mount of Peter Niven, the stable jockey, while the places aboard Express Gift and Executive Design will be filled by Nick Smith and Gary Cahill respectively.

The Ladbrokes (11 January): Ladbrokes: 5-1 Reveley; 10-1 Penny A Day, Family Way; 12-1 Executive Design; 14-1 Express Gift; 16-1 Niven; 20-1 Cahill; 25-1 Smith; 30-1 Niven; 33-1 Cahill; 40-1 Smith; 50-1 Niven; 60-1 Cahill; 70-1 Smith; 80-1 Niven; 90-1 Cahill; 100-1 Smith; 120-1 Niven; 140-1 Cahill; 160-1 Smith; 180-1 Niven; 200-1 Cahill; 250-1 Smith; 300-1 Niven; 350-1 Cahill; 400-1 Smith; 450-1 Niven; 500-1 Cahill; 550-1 Smith; 600-1 Niven; 650-1 Cahill; 700-1 Smith; 750-1 Niven; 800-1 Cahill; 850-1 Smith; 900-1 Niven; 950-1 Cahill; 1000-1 Smith; 1100-1 Niven; 1200-1 Cahill; 1300-1 Smith; 1400-1 Niven; 1500-1 Cahill; 1600-1 Smith; 1700-1 Niven; 1800-1 Cahill; 1900-1 Smith; 2000-1 Niven; 2100-1 Cahill; 2200-1 Smith; 2300-1 Niven; 2400-1 Cahill; 2500-1 Smith; 2600-1 Niven; 2700-1 Cahill; 2800-1 Smith; 2900-1 Niven; 3000-1 Cahill; 3100-1 Smith; 3200-1 Niven; 3300-1 Cahill; 3400-1 Smith; 3500-1 Niven; 3600-1 Cahill; 3700-1 Smith; 3800-1 Niven; 3900-1 Cahill; 4000-1 Smith; 4100-1 Niven; 4200-1 Cahill; 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# Criminal element infiltrates US sports culture

Michael Irvin, one of the most charismatic and talented players in American football, enters the new year contemplating the prospect of spending the next 20 years of his life in jail. The Dallas Cowboys wide receiver and Erik Williams, one of the team's best offensive linemen, have both been accused of rape.

A woman told police that on Sunday night, as Cowboys fans celebrated the team's week-end victory in the NFL play-offs against the Minnesota Vikings, Williams and another unidentified man raped her while Irvin held a gun to her head.

The Dallas police have not pressed any charges yet but after searching Williams' home on

New Year's Eve they confiscated a gun and a homemade videotape depicting two men having sex with a woman. A police spokesman said that the woman had been taken to hospital shortly after she went to the police with bruises and abrasions on her body.

Irvin, the glamour boy of the Super Bowl champions, insists that he is innocent. "I'm looking forward to seeing how you guys go rewrite, reprint, rerun all these things about what happened Sunday night when you find out that I wasn't even at Erik's house," he said.

But he has done have a record. Last year he was found guilty of drug possession and punished

## John Carlin in Washington says the two Cowboys accused of rape are symptomatic of American football's dark side

with a fine, 800 hours of community service and four years' probation. The judge who passed down the sentence warned him that if he violated the terms of his probation he would send him to jail for 20 years.

Williams, a fearsome giant of a man judged by many to be at least as valuable to the Cowboys' offensive game as touchdown receiver Irvin, was charged by the police with rape two years ago. The charges were dropped after the 17-year-old girl in question settled out of court.

It is tempting to conclude that you do not have to be depraved

to play American football, but it helps. Consider just some of the events of December.

The police reported on New Year's Eve that they were investigating a woman's complaint that she had been sexually assaulted by a player of the Philadelphia Eagles, defeated in the play-offs by the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday; a University of Southern California player was charged with rape; four players on the Grambling State University football team in Georgia were accused of raping a 15-year-old girl in a campus dormitory; two players at Virginia Tech, one

of America's top college teams, were each charged on one count of rape and one of attempted sodomy. During the last year, 19 Virginia Tech players have been arrested for crimes ranging from rape to malicious wounding and assault and battery.

And then, of course, there's the case of arguably the greatest player of modern times, OJ Simpson.

There is clearly a rotteness in the state of American football. Many players appear unable to restrain the testosterone rage required on the field from spilling over into their off-field activities.

The Cowboys appear particularly prone to scandal, with their head coach, Barry Switzer, hardly enhancing their image with his response to this week's events. "Both of them will play," he said.

Many American footballers, of course, are model citizens, some of them Dallas Cowboys. Take Bill Bates, a monstrously large linebacker with 14 years' experience in the NFL who is widely regarded in the game as decent and courteous in the Bobby Charlton mould. But the controversy generated by some of his more unseemly teammates is clearly getting to Bates.

In training on Wednesday, preparing for this weekend's play-off against the Carolina Panthers, he was wearing a

baseball cap bearing the pointed message "Shut Up and Play".

Expanding on his feelings to reporters, Bates said: "For a guy who his whole life wanted to play for the Dallas Cowboys, you know, at times it really makes you sick to your stomach."

Troy Aikman, the no less gentlemanly Cowboys quarterback, struggled at a press conference to retain his diplomatic composure. Asked whether reports were true that he was considering retirement from the game, Aikman replied calmly: "I still love competing but there's some other things that have taken away from my enjoyment of the game."

Clearly the Cowboys have been traumatised by events off the field. Playing big games



Irvin faces the media after a practice session this week

these days appears to have become an exercise in therapy as much as anything else, a balm of forgetfulness and merciful relief. "I think we all enjoy getting out there on Sundays," Aikman said, "and putting everything behind us for three hours."

## Welsh put their faith in Quinnell

Rugby Union  
CHRIS HEWITT

Kevin Bowring and his fellow Welsh selectors yesterday accepted one of the key principles of professional rugby - that the way to a good forward's heart is through his pocket - and recalled Scott Quinnell to the national side for tomorrow week's friendly with the United States at Cardiff Arms Park. Quinnell will play at No 8, with Steve Williams moving to blind-side flanker to cover for the injured Dale McIntosh.

In another change to the team beaten 37-20 by the world champions, South Africa, last month, Wales have chosen Gareth Thomas at left wing in place of Dafydd James. Thomas scored an exciting breakaway try against Australia four weeks ago, but missed the date with the Springboks after suffering mouth damage in a Bridgend club match.

There is no place for Jonathan Davies, who loses out to the bewilderingly gifted but dangerously erratic Arwel Thomas at outside-half, while Allan Bateman and Scott Gibbs, two more midfield players welcomed back into the union fold after spells in rugby league, hold their places in the centre. Bowring, the national coach, believes their partnership to be one of the most positive developments of the season.

Quinnell's return adds serious ballast to his current account as well as to the Welsh back-row. The 24-year-old Richmond player took umbrage at what he perceived to be blatant financial discrimination when the Welsh put home-based internationals on a £30,000 retainer compared with the £10,000 on offer to those earning a crust with English clubs. He duly declared himself unavailable for his country's pre-Christmas Test programme.

The dispute was solved by the intervention of Geoff Cartwright, a businessman from

Gwent, who coughed up £10,000 in sponsorship money. With Quinnell professing his determination to "help my country re-establish itself as a major international force", Bowring can look forward to developing a loose unit of real quality for the first time since taking over the reins 18 months ago.

Gwyn Jones, the Cardiff open-side flanker who made such an impact in last season's Five Nations' Championship, is close to reclaiming his Test place after shoulder trouble - he sits on the bench next week - and Williams' versatility opens up a number of options at blind side.

Talking of blind-side flankers, South Africa's World Cup-winning captain, Francois Pienaar, may need to exercise even more patience before making his debut for Saracens. Denied a run against Orrell last weekend by the weather, Pienaar's scheduled appearance against Bath on Saturday is also in the balance. Bath were experimenting with an industrial heater at the Recreation Ground yesterday but were doubtful that they would be able to improve the frozen surface in time to save the match.

Bath sources were also pessimistic about their chances of persuading Brian Ashton, their respected coach, to stay at the Rec. Frustrated at many aspects of the club's decision-making and dissatisfied with his own position in the chain of command, Ashton has been on extended leave since before Christmas. Tony Swift, the former international wing who chairs the club's management board, was expected to present new proposals to Ashton last night in an effort to stave off the coach's resignation.

WELSH SQUAD vs USA: Forwards: Gareth Thomas, Dafydd James, Kevin Bowring, Scott Gibbs, Arwel Thomas, Allan Bateman, Scott Quinnell, Dale McIntosh. Backs: Gareth Thomas, Dafydd James, Kevin Bowring, Scott Gibbs, Arwel Thomas, Allan Bateman, Scott Quinnell, Dale McIntosh.

## Burgess dies aged 73

John Burgess, a former England coach and former Rugby Football Union president, has died, aged 73. Burgess was coach of the national team for just one season but had an enormous influence within rugby union.

"His first and second rugby loves were the red roses of England and Lancashire," John Richardson, the president of the RFU, said yesterday.

"Dedicated, emotional, a loyal friend and a fierce defender

of rugby union, he will be sadly missed."

Burgess was England coach for the 1974-75 season, during which time they only Five Nations win was a 7-6 effort against Scotland at Twickenham in the last game of the season. His greatest coaching triumph was masterminding North-West Counties' win over the All Blacks in 1972 - the first time an England provincial team had defeated New Zealand.

## Hands up for Priestley, the check-out king at the centre of attention



Dennis Priestley raises his arm in triumph after beating Ritchie Gardner 3-1 in his closing group match of the World Darts Championship at Purfleet, Essex, yesterday. But the 46-year-old Yorkshireman was rarely at

his best, despite producing the highest check-out possible of 170 in the opening set to share a £1,000 prize with Steve Raw who had performed this feat earlier in the week. More impressive was the defending

champion, Phil Taylor, who also progressed to the quarter-finals yesterday. Taylor, 36, from Stoke, beat Gerald Verrier in three straight sets in his final group match. He lost only one leg, had three 180s and check-

outs of 136 and 125 on his way to victory. Taylor beat Priestley 6-4 in the final last year and is attempting to win the title for the third successive year.

Photograph: Robert Hallam

## Weather extends its kingdom of chaos

The Football Association will go ahead with the FA Cup fourth-round draw on Sunday no matter how many games are postponed.

Eight pitch inspections have already been scheduled for today, two of them involving Premier League clubs, Coventry City and Leicester City.

Birmingham are particularly anxious to get the go-ahead to play Stevenage, as their last three matches have all fallen victim to the weather. Their manager, Trevor Francis, said: "The majority of the pitch is playable and there has been a big improvement."

The rugby union programme has also been hit by the postponement of Courage League matches at Bedford, Coventry and London Welsh. In Wales, second-placed Pontypridd's First Division home game with Newport is also off.

The US Eagles' tour match against the Welsh champions, Neath, tomorrow has been switched to Cardiff Arms Park. But the match is by no means certain to go ahead, despite an undersoil heating system which has been working overtime.

The £250,000 worth of technology could not save Wednesday's match between Emerging

Wales and the Eagles. It was postponed two hours before kick-off.

"Hopefully, we will get this game to go ahead," said a Welsh Rugby Union spokesman, Peter Owens. "On Wednesday the air temperature was so cold that certain areas were still worked, though, because the ground un-

derneath the surface was OK."

Ireland are confident that the international against Italy in Dublin will survive. Light snow has been cleared and a protective covering laid on the pitch.

The Italian squad arrived in Dublin yesterday morning followed by Ireland's squad returning after four days of warm weather training in the Algarve.

In rugby league, Oldham's plan to play their final, commemorative match at the soon to be demolished Watersheddings ground against Swinton on Sunday has had to be put off.

Racing faces a seventh straight day without action on turf today following three further postponements. No jump racing has taken place in Britain since the meeting at Musselburgh last Friday. Today's only meeting will be on the all-weather track at Southwell. A total of 49 jumps meetings have now been lost during this season, 39 since Christmas.

## No job for Lydon yet

else - with the job," he said. Wigan, who do not appear to have tried very hard to keep Lydon on board, are now without a team manager, as well as a chief executive.

Leeds, on the other hand, will have one man doubling up. Their chief executive, Gary Hetherington, has further signalled his intention to be a "hands-on" boss by taking on the football manager's responsibilities after Hugh McGahan's departure.

Hetherington will take charge of transfers and contracts, while the head coach, Dean Bell, will also assume control of the club's Alliance team.

Wigan and St Helens are at odds over a new date for the second leg of their Winter Challenge, which was postponed on New Year's Day.

Wigan want to play the match on 19 January. Saints already have a friendly arranged that day and favour 12 January. The League has been asked to adjudicate.

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### SPORTING DIGEST

#### American Football

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL BOWL GAMES:** Rose Bowl: Oregon 20-13; Sun Bowl: Texas Tech 15-10; Fiesta Bowl: Arizona 15-10; Cotton Bowl: Texas 15-10; Orange Bowl: Miami 15-10; Sugar Bowl: LSU 15-10; Outback Bowl: Minnesota 15-10; Pinstripe Bowl: Penn State 15-10.

#### Athletics

**RED BELL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP:** (continued from p. 26) Group C: 1. England 2-0, 2. Scotland 1-0, 3. Wales 1-0, 4. Ireland 1-0, 5. France 1-0, 6. Italy 1-0, 7. Spain 1-0, 8. Portugal 1-0, 9. Greece 1-0, 10. Turkey 1-0, 11. Czech Republic 1-0, 12. Slovakia 1-0, 13. Hungary 1-0, 14. Poland 1-0, 15. Romania 1-0, 16. Bulgaria 1-0, 17. Croatia 1-0, 18. Slovenia 1-0, 19. Serbia 1-0, 20. Montenegro 1-0, 21. Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0, 22. Macedonia 1-0, 23. Albania 1-0, 24. Kosovo 1-0, 25. North Macedonia 1-0, 26. Bulgaria 1-0, 27. Romania 1-0, 28. Serbia 1-0, 29. Montenegro 1-0, 30. Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0, 31. Macedonia 1-0, 32. Albania 1-0, 33. Kosovo 1-0, 34. North Macedonia 1-0, 35. Bulgaria 1-0, 36. Romania 1-0, 37. Serbia 1-0, 38. Montenegro 1-0, 39. Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0, 40. Macedonia 1-0, 41. Albania 1-0, 42. Kosovo 1-0, 43. North Macedonia 1-0, 44. Bulgaria 1-0, 45. Romania 1-0, 46. Serbia 1-0, 47. Montenegro 1-0, 48. Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0, 49. Macedonia 1-0, 50. 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**Barnes storm**  
Anfield awaits the man  
who broke United, page 25

# sport

**In Monday's Independent**  
The pain of '96: Exclusive  
interview with Pete Sampras

## Lloyd insists second leg of tour starts today

### Cricket

MARK BALDWIN  
reports from Harare

England's players have been told they face "like rabbits in the headlights" by their coach, David Lloyd, who has used team meetings following yesterday's five-run defeat against Zimbabwe to hammer home the message that he expects a vast improvement in today's final one-day international here.

Lloyd is still angry about his side's display on New Year's Day. "Tomorrow is not like an end-of-season knockabout, with nothing at stake," Lloyd said yesterday about a game which is now technically academic, with Zimbabwe 2-0 up in the three-match series. "I'm looking for the right reaction from our players and they should be shooting right out of the traps for this game. As far as I am concerned, and the players know this, the second leg of our

tour starts tomorrow, not in New Zealand next week. "These are professional England players and they have to show they can perform. I don't think, if you look at these two sides, that you can say that Zimbabwe are a better team than England," Lloyd added. "We had the upper hand in both Test matches, but we have played diabolically in the two one-day internationals. "Yesterday we got ourselves into position several times to

win the game but we bottled it. We bottled out. It was a freeze situation, like rabbits in the headlights. "England have named the same team for today's match, which looked to be in some doubt early yesterday when heavy thunderstorms hit Harare. By late afternoon, however, the rain had passed, but any more rain overnight could cause problems. Lloyd said there had been no thought of dropping Mike

Atherton, and he confirmed that the captain was better suited to the No 5 position for this match. "He's not in the best of form and his feet are not going in the right place at the moment," Lloyd admitted. "But I've every confidence that he will come through it. With the form that he's in, and with the conditions here of slow pitches and slow outfielders, I think that there is more advantage in him batting at No 5. We've also been pleased with the way Nick

Knight and Alec Stewart have performed at the top of the order in the first 15 overs." Lloyd also expanded on two particular aspects of England's display on Wednesday which displeased him: the bowling of 10 wides and three no-balls and then the failure of the batsmen to take charge of the run chase. "It didn't appear from the outside that we had a game plan but we do chat and plan ahead," Lloyd said. "But there were a couple of partnerships out there

where both batsmen were playing the anchor role. When John Crawley and Nasser Hussain were together, for instance, we scored only 14 runs in eight overs at one stage." Lloyd said that he was determined to get on with his job of trying to produce a successful England team. "It's up to me to tackle it, that's the job I'm doing and that's the challenge. Of course I feel frustration and I can accept an off day. But we have too many."

England's coach also defended the decision to give his players a day off yesterday instead of calling a press conference. "After playing a one-day international, players are tired. In fact they should be exhausted. You have to have your rest days afterwards."

ENGLAND (One-day international): Ian Botham, Graham Gooch, David Lloyd, Nasser Hussain, Alec Stewart, Nick Knight, P. Chelms, A. Jones, A.A. Jones, R.C. Jones, C. White, D.B. Cook, D. Gough, C.E.W. Silverwood, A.D. Mollath. Surrey wicketkeeper, P. Jones, page 25

## Celtic stunned by Andersen's fairy-tale finish

### Football

DAVID MCKINNEY  
Rangers 3  
Celtic 1

Two late goals from Erik Bo Andersen will put Rangers into a familiar position going into the new year and, having secured three points against their closest rivals, their lead at the top of the Premier Division would seem to be unassailable.

The Ibrox club are 14 points ahead and, although Celtic have two games in hand, it would take a monumental collapse by the eight-times champions if they are to be bettered by the end of the season.

Andersen, who has not always been a favourite with the Rangers support or even management, endeared himself to the faithful with two killer goals in the final seven minutes to continue Rangers' recent run of successes against Celtic.

Most observers conceded that victory for Rangers would provide a virtually unassailable lead in their search for a ninth league title, and the home side was buoyed by the statistics of a run of eight games without defeat against their greatest rivals, with Celtic's last new year victory coming back in 1988.

### Ferguson defends Beckham

Manchester United's manager Alex Ferguson has reacted with anger to David Beckham's booking after being spat at by Savo Milosevic during Wednesday's 0-0 draw against Aston Villa at Old Trafford.

Ferguson said: "There is nothing we can do as a club. We will have to see what the referee decides if he takes a look at the video. There is no procedure to wipe the booking from the slate, but it is annoying because it could have been avoided."

referee, David Elleray, will study a video recording before filing his report. Television cameras caught Milosevic in the act of spitting at Beckham after a late tackle.

Ferguson said: "There is nothing we can do as a club. We will have to see what the referee decides if he takes a look at the video. There is no procedure to wipe the booking from the slate, but it is annoying because it could have been avoided."

neither side was able to exert a sustained influence on the game, with Paul Gascoigne showing up only in flashes while Celtic's forwards failed to break free of their shackles.

The simmering tension surfaced on a couple of occasions, with Di Canio appearing to throw himself to the ground in a challenge with Alan McLaren for which the Rangers man was cautioned, and there was a yellow card for Alan Stubbs of Celtic for a foul on Goram shortly before the interval. The only other moment of note was an Ian Ferguson shot which whistled past the post.

Ferguson caught the eye with his aggressive tackling and accurate passing, but for a while there a lack of urgency about the Rangers side as a whole.

Di Canio, on the left, sent in a curling ball aimed at the head of Pierre van Hooijdonk, who had come on in the 52nd minute for Donnelly, and it took a magnificent save by Goram to push the striker's header round the post. Cadete saw a close-range header in the 65th minute saved by Goram. Then Gascoigne, who had been doubtful before the start, was replaced by Charlie Miller, and within seconds Celtic had equalised.

A move down the left saw the ball shuttled from Tom Boyd into the penalty area for Cadete, then Van Hooijdonk, and when the ball ran loose Di Canio stabbed home a low shot from six yards.

With seven minutes left Andersen swept Rangers into the lead with a low shot and he repeated the feat one minute from time to ensure a historic victory for Rangers.

Rangers (4-5-1): Goram; Peck, McJannet, Birkhurst, Robertson; Cleland, Moore (Andersen, 76), Ferguson, Gascoigne (Miller, 65), Alberty, McCosker (Van Hooijdonk, 76). Celtic (3-5-2): Hart, O'Hall, Stubbs (Thom, 62), Boyd, McLennan, Donnelly (Van Hooijdonk, 52), McStay, Harech, O'Donnell, Cadete, Di Canio. Substitutes not used: Weir, Jones. Referee: J. McCuskey (Stirling).



Paolo Di Canio, scorer of Celtic's equaliser, tries to surge between two Rangers defenders at Ibrox last night Photograph: Ben Radford/Allsport

## Ince to decide future at end of season

NICK DUXBURY

Paul Ince is to decide whether to stay with Internazionale at the end of the season after already having rejected an offer from Arsenal.

The England midfielder's contract at Inter, where he moved last year from Manchester United, runs to 1999 and he has become a firm favourite with spectators at the San Siro. "Arsenal came looking for me about a month ago but I said 'no'," Ince said yesterday.

He left open whether the current season would be his last with Inter, saying he would meet the club's chairman, Massimo Moratti, at the end of the season to "clarify my position and see what's best to do." "I'm not interested in mak-

ing long-term plans now. I'll decide my future in four or five months' time," he said. The Arsenal manager, Arsene Wenger, has indicated that he might be interested in buying Ince if he became available.

Ince has been the subject of racial abuse from opposing fans and has a poor disciplinary record in Italy. He was given a four-match ban on Monday for protesting with foul language and abusive gestures after he was sent off against Reggina earlier this month - his third red card of the season.

Ince said he was surprised by the toughness of the suspension but not by the sending-off. "Stop writing that I have problems with Italian referees. The sending-off against Reggina was right and any English referee would have taken the same

decision. Four matches is a bit excessive, though, and frankly I expected less." He also denied Italian media reports his family are unhappy in Italy and wanted to return to England. "It's not true at all. Claire, Thomas and I are perfectly happy in Italy."

Arsenal have nine players either doubtful or already ruled out of the FA Cup third-round tie with Sunderland at Highbury tomorrow.

Their top scorer, Ian Wright, is suspended, while David Seaman, David Platt, Lee Dixon and Remi Garde are all out injured. Dennis Bergkamp, Paul Merson, Tony Adams and Ray Parlour will require treatment before Wenger can piece together his team.

Wenger has opened a disciplinary inquest into why Arse-

nal have collected four red cards in the last eight matches.

John Hartson is the latest to land a two-match ban after being sent off in the last minute against Middlesbrough on Wednesday for directing a torrent of foul-mouthed abuse at the referee, Mike Reed.

Hartson, who has been ordered to a meeting with Wenger before training this morning, is now banned from the fourth round of the Cup should Arse-

nal progress past Sunderland.

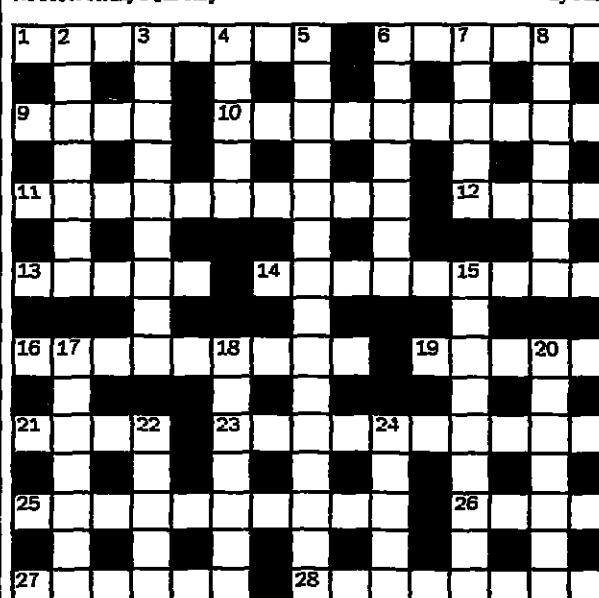
Birmingham City have offered Stoke City £1.5m for the striker Mike Sheron, while Everton are prepared to pay £1m for Aston Villa's unsettled centre-back Carl Tiller.

Norwich City and Crystal Palace have been charged by the FA with misconduct and failure to control their players following the brawl which marred their First Division match on 14 December.

### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3186, Friday 3 January

By Phil



Thursday's solution

DOWN  
1. Female leading poor sergeant a dance (8)  
6. Match official investing in wagger should be left alone? (6)  
9. Look over most of brief (4)  
10. Round variety of the round bread of dog (5-5)  
11. Irascibility upset the cousins (10)  
12. The old expression of contentment - or a more recent one? (4)  
13. & 14. Chip-shop owner's reason for lack of interest? (5,4,2,3)  
16. & 19. Unhappy consequences of putting pillows in the dustbin? (4,2,3,5)  
21. Vitality from some amazement (4)  
23. Union worker with striking success? (5-5)  
25. Intriguing event, showing what defender shouldn't have done for goal? (6,4)  
26. Flag of Eire is trimmed (4)  
27. Anger's not entirely fine in the pursuit of peace (6)  
28. Castle bound to bring in men, initially to act as watch? (4,4)  
2. Prevent entry of rugby forward dropped from the team? (4,3)  
3. Crazy woman embracing one believing in good an evil (9)  
4. One chap's upset without love from a woman (5)  
5. Conservative song adopting a correct approach? (2,3,5,5)  
6. Soup, namely, encompassed by redefinition of "broth" (7)  
7. With enough space for a marsupial - go! (5)  
8. Ruffian vandalised entertainment area (7)  
15. Work for optician could be shaped to suit Carol (9)  
17. Start song allusively (4-3)  
18. Moving? Mother put in expression of negation mostly... (7)  
20. ...before mother's receiving one bill for insurance? (7)  
22. One making up the numbers is fine among the rest of the soccer team (5)  
24. Hold about 50? make that 25! (5)

## Cycling hails a champion as Indurain retires...

Miguel Indurain, arguably Spain's greatest sportsman, yesterday brought his cycling career to an end in a hotel in his home town of Pamplona.

The only man to win the Tour de France five years in a row, on longer has the hunger to compete at the top level. "I've dedicated enough time to professional cycling," Indurain said. "After deliberating this decision for a long time, I believe I have made the best decision for myself and my family."

Indurain, 32, began considering retiring in 1996 after some uninspired performances. He finished a dismal 11th in the Tour de France in July and dropped out of the Tour of Spain because of a cold.

Indurain, whose career has made him a wealthy man, is to dedicate himself "to other pursuits". He did not specify what they might be.

Indurain said he was glad to have been able to crown his career with a gold medal in the men's time trial in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. He also won the Tour of Italy twice.

In July, Indurain appeared to lack the tremendous drive in the Tour de France that in other years had made him dominant. The Tour de France director, Jean-Marie LeBlanc, said: "I think that psychologically, he is a bit saturated. At his age, soon to be 33, he has known all the success, glory, fame and material comfort and no longer has the hunger for cycling he did over the last few years."

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No other athlete in Spain where football is by far the most popular sport commands such admiration, respect and enthusiasm from Spaniards, especially in his native Navarre region of northern Spain, of which Pamplona is the capital.

Indurain's laconic manner as a champion east against type in the flashy, big-money world of international sport has much to do with his appeal. "It is not easy to forget all that Miguel has done, but in the end we will remember Miguel the person more than the cyclist," said Abraham Olano, the 1995 world road champion and widely seen as the most promising successor to Indurain.

Matchless but modest Indurain, page 25

### and weightlifting also salutes a legend

The weight of years and the demands of training were ultimately too much for Turkey's "Pocket Hercules" to bear, as Naim Suleymanoglu, the compact weightlifter who captured three Olympic gold medals and the hearts of his adopted homeland, announced his retirement yesterday.

"I am now 30. It is enough. I am announcing that I am putting an end to my active sports life," Suleymanoglu said. He became a national hero after winning his first Olympic

gold in 1988 in Seoul. He has also won seven world championships - two before he defected from his native Bulgaria in 1986.

In the last Olympic Games, the 4ft 11in Suleymanoglu broke his own world record with a combined lift of 738½ pounds (53½ lb) in snatch and clean-and-jerk.

Weightlifting has given me a lot, and it has given me a lot of joy," Suleymanoglu said. "My next target would have been the Sydney games. But I

cannot remain in active weightlifting for four more years."

Suleymanoglu said he wanted to continue working in weightlifting as technical director or manager. "But for now I only have one goal: to rest for a long while and catch up on all that I have missed out on in my youth."

Suleymanoglu, born into an ethnic Turkish family, was universally honoured and admired for helped put Turkish sports back on the map.

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